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The class and the desk

THE

CLASS AND THE DESK

A MANUAL FOR

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS

Old Testament Series.

BY

JAMES COMPER GRAY ✓

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PREFATORY NOTE.

I DESIRE, in addition to the remarks prefatory to "The Class and the Desk,"—New Testament Series,—to draw the reader's attention to the "Hints to Teachers" prefixed to the Lessons, on the first page of this and the foregoing volume. The object proposed by placing these "preparations" in the hands of Sunday-school teachers is so entirely different from that contemplated by commentators in the general, that only disappointment will ensue if these lessons be read as commentaries usually are. Unlike them, however, this book is not intended as in any sense an exhaustive treatise; but as a repository of disconnected and suggestive hints. To have printed the text, entire, of the passages selected, would have very much increased the bulk and cost of the book, without, at the same time, adding to its utility in a proportionate degree. In the absence of that text, therefore, *it is absolutely necessary that the reader should consult the notes side by side with the text of the Scripture,*

PREFATORY NOTE.

otherwise I cannot promise that much advantage will be derived from their perusal. As needful also is it, that the references to other passages of the Bible should be found out and read in the order in which they occur, if the full use of these volumes is to be understood. The writer is confident that where these "hints" are followed, and "The Class and the Desk," as a consequence, is legitimately studied, it will be acknowledged—as already it has been by a vast number of teachers—that he has not striven in vain to place a really useful book in the hands of his co-workers in that interesting and important department of Christian labour, the Sunday-school.

That all who are trying to instruct the young in the truth as it is in Jesus, and lead them to the "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," may be eminently successful in the highest sense—as winners of souls—is the very sincere and earnest prayer of

THE AUTHOR.

Halifax, August, 1867.

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HINTS TO TEACHERS ON THE USE OF THE FOLLOWING NOTES OF PREPARATION FOR THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

The following method is recommended. Let the selected lesson be first read over by the teacher at home, and carefully compared with the text on which it is founded, the Scripture references being also, at the same time, consulted. An hour will in most cases suffice for this preliminary work. Surrounded by his class in the school let this be the order of procedure. In the first place let the Scripture, indicated at the head of the lesson, be read by the class, without comment. Then let it be read through a second time, the teacher adding—by way of explanation—such remarks as may be suggested by the “*notes* ;” taking care by frequent questions and recapitulation that the whole is understood. Conclude with the “*Analysis*,” directing the class to find out and read the texts to which reference is made. A very little practice will show the teacher how much time he can afford to allot to each of these three steps. It will be found to be advantageous to commence with the first lesson and proceed regularly through the volume : since the whole series comprehends the principal incidents of the Old Testament history conveniently arranged.

The “*Analyses*” of the Lessons will, it is believed, be useful to those who have occasionally to deliver an address from “*the desk*” of the school.

References to many distinguished authors have been added, in the hope that they may be useful to those who have access to their writings. Those who do not possess these books will not be inconvenienced by the references, but will simply pass them over.

ABBREVIATIONS.

It has been found to be needful for the sake of condensation to use certain contractions, which will in most instances be readily understood. The following are the principal :—

<i>all.</i>	means	allusion.	<i>marg.</i>	means	margin of Bible.
<i>com.</i>	”	compare.	<i>ref.</i>	”	reference, or refer to.
<i>Gk.</i>	”	Greek.	<i>sig.</i>	”	signifies.
<i>Heb.</i>	”	Hebrew.	=	”	equivalent to.
<i>i. e.</i>	”	that is.	<i>ill.</i>	”	illustration.

A.	= Ainsworth on Pentateuch.
C.D.N.T.	= Class and Desk, New Test.
D.B.N.S.	= Duns' Biblical Natural Science.
K.D.	= Kiel and Delitzsch.
K D.B.I.	= Kitto's Daily Biblical Illustrations.
K.E.B.L.	= Kitto's Encyclopædia of Biblical Literature.
K.P.B.	= Kitto's Pictorial Bible.
L.	= Lightfoot's Works (fol. ed.).

M.H.J.	= Milman's History of Jews.
P.	= Matt. Poole's Annotations.
P.C.	= Portable Commentary (Collins).
R.B.R.	= Robinson's Biblical Researches.
S.B.D.	= Smith's Biblical Dictionary.
S.J.C.	= Stanley's Jewish Church.
S.S.P.	= Stanley's Sinai and Palestine.
T.B.K.	= Treasury of Biblical Knowledge.
T.L.B.	= Thomson's Land and the Book.

To save the space that would be occupied by the reprinting of proper names, their initial letter only is used, after the full name has been once given in a lesson. Other contractions are equally self-interpretative.

B.C. 4004. Gen. ii. 1—17.

- 1 *Thus*, as narrated, Gen. i. . . . *heavens*, firmament (i. 8). . . . *earth*, the world. . . . *host*, all that therein is, i. e. the heavenly bodies, and vegetable and animal forms (Ps. xxxiii. 6, 7). . . . *rested*: not that He was weary (Is. xl. 28), but that the work was done (Ex. xx. 11; Heb. iv. 1—10). . . . *sanctified*, pronounced it holy, and set it apart for holy uses
- 4 (Is. lviii. 13; *C. D. N. T.* 51). . . . *created*, out of nothing. . . . *made*, formed out of existing material, *marg.* (Heb. xi. 3). . . . *generations*, births, beginnings. . . . *day*, time, season, period (Ps. xc. 4; 2 Pet. iii. 8). Word day in Bible often = period of indefinite length; hence the 6 days in cap. i.
- 5 *may* = 6 indefinite times or epochs. . . . *plant* (Ps. civ. 14). . . . *before* grew, before the conditions of its being were finally adjusted. Before there were light, heat, rain (com. i. 12 and 14). . . . *rain* (Job xxxviii. 26—28). . . . *to till*: tillage, another condition of vegetable perfection and increase (iii. 23). . . . *up. mist*: a watery vapour, attracted and distributed
- 7 by the atmosphere. . . . *Lord God*. Having built the house, and furnished it, and not till then. . . . *man* (“the minister, and interpreter of nature”), in the image of God (i. 26); a spiritual, reasoning, and immortal being, with vast dominion, Jas. iii. 9. (On antiq. of man, see McCausland, “*Adam and the Adamite*,” *D. B. N. S.* i. 527; Birks’ “*Scientific Theories of Origin of Man*,” p. 80.) Heb. the Adam = reddish brown. . . . *dust* (Heb. the Adamah). The substance of our physical nature is of the same elements as the soil (Ps. cxxxix. 14—16). . . . *breathed*: origin of soul dif. from that of body. . . . *breath . life*, lit. of lives. Animal and spiritual
- 8 L. (Jo. xx. 22; 1 Cor. xv. 45). . . . *planted*, with special care. . . . *Eden* = pleasantness. In the LXX, called Paradise. (*S. S. P.* 518.) Sit. undetermined; prob. in Mesopotamia. Eden, the state, may be known; though the garden be hidden. . . . *there*, in the choicest part of a beautiful world. . . . *pleasant . good*. The Spartan prayer, “Grant us the beautiful with the good,” realized in Eden. . . . *tree . life*. What kind of tree, and why so called, we know not. . . . *midst*, as a most conspicuous
- 10 object. . . . *tree of knowledge*, another unknown T. . . . *river*, flowing through. . . . *went out*, to fertilize and beautify other regions. Its
- 15 branches cannot be *all* identified. . . . *to dress*, not to eat the bread of
- 16 idleness. Labour, a condition of the paradisaic state. . . . *keep it*, as the servant of the great Master. . . . *every tree*, but one. A supply which ought to have satisfied (1 Tim. vi. 6). . . . *freely eat*, without stint or fear.
- 17 *tree . knowledge . not eat*. Why this limitation? only *one*, the breach of which made needful so many laws? The reason not in the nature of the tree, so much as in the relation of man to God. Man was constantly to know and feel that he was a servant under law. The tree, to remind him of this. A simple, easy, and only trial of obedience. . . . *die*. The magnitude of the punishment shows the great evil of sin. What may to some seem a little sin contained the germs of all evil. Selfishness and pride. The worst form of death, thus introduced, was spiritual and moral. This chiefly meant, since in “the day” when the sin was committed, the punishment was inflicted, and still Adam lived on. (*Hitchcock’s Geology*, 158. *Pye Smith’s Scrip. and Geol.*, p. 208, 4th ed.) Com. 1 Cor. xv. 22. *Lardner’s Works*, x. 213. *D. B. N. S. Bridgewater Treatise* (Whewell). “*Testimony of Rocks*” (Miller). “*Sermons in Stones*” (McCausland).

The first Work—Sabbath—Garden—Man—Stewardship—Command.

- I. THE FIRST WORK. The creation. The Mosaic account true. Otherwise : (1.) Does the word of God—a God of truth—begin with a mere legend? (2.) Are the disclosures of science, which corroborate this history, also false? (3.) Is the New Test. also false? in which are 66 passages, quotations from, and allusions to, the first 11 chaps of Gen. (4.) If it be merely poetical, where are characteristics of Hebrew poetry? (5.) Can the creation be otherwise, and more satisfactorily explained? (6.) How comes it that the wisest and best of men, inspired and uninspired, have uniformly accepted the history as true? (*See Art. "Creation" in T. B. K. and S. B. D.*)
- II. THE FIRST SABBATH. (1.) The forerunner of all the others. Consecrated by the *rest*, and hallowed by the *word* of God. (2.) Type of the "rest that remaineth." (3.) Sabbath in Paradise. The Creator's smile gilding the scene. (4.) The Sabbath, a part of the system into which man was introduced. Made for man, as much as *plants*, and *herbs*, and "*every tree*." Needful for worship, as much as other days for labour. Worship and labour both needful. (5.) Man's first day, a Sabbath day. In heaven it will be the first, last, and only day.
- III. THE FIRST GARDEN. Eden = delight. (1.) Situation of Paradise that man lost, unknown. Landmarks obliterated by the Deluge. It may be sought, and found in every part of the world. "Thy presence makes my paradise," &c. (2.) God planted the first garden; our flowers are lineal descendants of Eden's bright blossoms, as *we* are of the "grand old gardener"—Adam. Let the colours and perfumes of summer call that garden to mind. (3.) Cultivate flowers of holiness, and fruits of godliness; possess the rose of Sharon and the true Vine, and Paradise will be regained.
- IV. THE FIRST MAN. Adam. "Of the earth, earthy." His happiness (i. 28). His moral dignity, likeness of God (i. 26; Ep. iv. 24; Col. iii. 10). His mental greatness; named the animals, &c. (ii. 20). His regal position (i. 28). His relation to other created intelligences (Heb. ii. 7, 8). His great age; lived 930 years (v. 5). During 243 years a contemporary of Methuselah, who for 600 years was contem. of his grandson Noah. (*Kitto's Daily Illus.* i. 28, 1866.)
- V. THE FIRST STEWARDSHIP. To dress and keep a garden. Lowly, healthful; needing diligence, forethought, &c. Mere office, however lofty, does not dignify; nor however humble, degrade. The great ancestor of the race, a gardener.
- VI. THE FIRST COMMAND. A *command* to remind man of his subordinate relation, his duty, &c. Only *one*, very simple and easy. In common life the breach of one often makes many injunctions needful.

B.C. 4004. Gen. iii. 1—13.

- 1 *Serpent*. Such was the animal employed by Satan (Rev. xii. 9; xx. 20), to accomplish man's ruin. Why, in preference to any other, we know not. It may be that its secret, noiseless motion,—its poisonous nature, in some instances,—its destructive embrace, in others,—or its power of fascination, commended it to the feelings and habits of the tempter. . . . *subtil* (Mat. x. 16), with its stealthy approach, deadly folds, fascinating eye, or fatal poison. . . . *said*. In her ignorance of his nature. Eve was neither alarmed by his presence nor surprised by his speech . . . *God said*. He knew this. Provoked her pride by exaggerating her subordinate relation to her Maker. Thus *subtly* the devil quotes the Divine Word to serve
- 2 his purpose (Mat. iv. 6; *C. D. N. T.*). . . . *woman said*, entering innocently, and without suspicion into discussion. . . . *may eat*. Satan would have her think of what was *forbidden*; she would think also of what was
- 3 allowed. . . . *die*: death not unknown to her. Lower creatures subject to it. Prob. but for sin man had been translated like holy Enoch (Gen.
- 4 v. 22, 24; Heb. xi. 5). . . . *not surely die* (Jo. viii. 44; 2 Cor. xi. 3).
- 5 *the day*. She expected that death would be instant. As indeed it was in its then immediately beginning. . . . *eyes . opened*. She expecting they would be closed in death. He not only insinuated an evasion of death, but suggested a positive advantage from disobedience. . . . *good . evil*.
- 6 How much better to know only good! . . . *good . food*: apparently so. *pleasant*, desirable. . . . *one wise*, as Satan had promised. . . . *she took*, and still lived. . . . *eat*, and died not. . . . *gave . husband*. Who, in Eve living before him, had a proof that one might eat and live. . . . *did eat*, and thus violated the only command that reminded him of allegiance; and
- 7 embittered every blessing by which his existence was crowned. . . . *eyes . opened* (*Kiel and Delitzsch on Pentateuch*, i. 96). "They had lost that blessed blindness, the ignorance of innocence, which knows nothing of nakedness." "The history of every temptation and of every sin is the same; the outward object of attraction, the inward commotion of mind, the increase and triumph of passionate desire; ending in the degradation, slavery, and ruin of the soul" (*Dr Jamieson*). (Jas. i. 15; 1 Jo. ii. 16). *sewed*, plaited, entwined. The first act of guilty conscience; the first
- 8 feeling—shame. . . . *heard*, what before had given pleasure. . . . *voice*, calling them by name (v. 9). . . . *cool*, lit. breeze. Let *our* reproofs be given when anger has cooled down. . . . *hid*. Second act of guilty conscience—fear. . . . *amongst . trees*. Like guilty children, from an offended father. How could the trees hide them from God? Blind folly, another
- 9 fruit of the fall. . . . *Where, &c.*? Morally, as well as bodily? What is
- 10 now thy condition? . . . *because*, &c. So soon had Adam become a servant of the "father of lies." As if God could be thus deceived. Oh the blind-
- 11 ness of sin! . . . *Hast . eaten*. God knew. This question proved it. He
- 12 would have Adam tell the truth. . . . *man said*: could not deny it, but prevaricated. . . . *The woman*. Moral cowardice lays the blame on another. *Thou . gavest*. Does he impiously insinuate that the fault is God's? (Jas.
- 13 i. 13). . . . *unto . woman*, who was given as a help meet for her husband; not to be a hinderer. . . . *The serpent*: so she also would shift the responsibility. But the sin was hers and Adam's, whosever might be the temptation. . . . *beguiled*, deceived; led me on. . . . *and I did eat* (*see Milton's Paradise Lost*, Bk I. vs. 1—5).

 Traditions—The first Temptation—first Sin—Texts, &c.

Corroborative of the Mosaic account of the fall are numerous ancient corrupted traditions. Thus : (1.) On an ancient bas-relief of the story of Prometheus and Pandora, a man and woman are represented standing naked and disconsolate under a tree ; and a figure seated on a rock is strangling a serpent. (2.) Apollo destroys the serpent Python, and is crowned with laurel. (3.) Hercules—who in his infancy had destroyed a serpent—gathered the apples of Hesperides, having killed the serpent that kept the tree. (4.) Many gems, &c., represent Hercules killing a serpent entwined about a fruit-laden tree. (See *K. D. B. I.* i. 51.)

- I. THE FIRST TEMPTATION. (1.) To be tempted, and to sin, two different things. Christ was tempted but did not sin (*Heb. iv. 15*). (2.) Its source : (*a.*) not man, who was holy, innocent, happy. "A solicitation to sin could come only from without ;" (*b.*) not from God. He "tempteth no man" (*Jas. i. 13*) ; (*c.*) but from the devil. Disarmed suspicion by assuming a familiar form. No living creature, not even the serpent, then inspired fear. (3.) Appeared thus to *Eve*, whose knowledge was partial. Speech used by a serpent would have "opened the eyes" of *Adam*, who had named the beasts according to their nature. (4.) Concealed the real death that would be introduced. Told a partial truth ; "your eyes shall be opened." Half truths are the devil's most successful lies. Thus Tennyson says :—

"That a lie, which is part a truth, is ever the blackest of lies ;
That a lie, which is all a lie, may be met, and fought with, outright,
But a lie, which is part a truth, is a harder matter to fight."

- II. THE FIRST SIN. Apparently small, and by the thoughtless often spoken lightly of, as such. But as all sin is a violation of principle, injures the moral sense, imperils the soul, and dishonours God, no transgression can be truly called a little sin. Sin is the transgression of law (1 *Jo. iii. 4*). This was the only sin that could be committed, since there was but one law (*Ro. iv. 15*). It was great, because the only one possible. It contained the elements of all evil : disobedience (*Ro. v. 19*), pride, unbelief, blindness, ingratitude, selfishness, covetousness, &c. As from small fountains, mighty rivers have their beginning ; so from this sin, all transgression took its rise and character (*Ro. v. 12* ; 1 *Cor. xv. 22*).

Scrip. texts relating to the fall :—Through temptation of the devil (2 *Cor. xi. 3* ; 1 *Tim. ii. 14*). Man, through it, born in sin (*Job xv. 14* ; *xxv. 4* ; *Ps. li. 5* ; *Is. xlviii. 8* ; *Jo. iii. 6*) ; a child of the devil (*Mat. xiii. 38* ; 1 *Jo. iii. 8, 10*) ; a child of wrath (*Ep. ii. 3*). All are affected by it (1 *Ki. viii. 46* ; *Gal. iii. 22* ; *Jo. i. 8* ; 1 *Jo. v. 19*). Effects : expulsion from paradise (*Gen. iii. 24*) ; labour and sorrow (*Gen. iii. 16, 19* ; *Job v. 6, 7*) ; temporal death (*Gen. iii. 19* ; *Ro. v. 12* ; 1 *Cor. xv. 22*) ; eternal death (*Job xxi. 30* ; *Ro. v. 18, 21* ; *vi. 23*).

Hitchcock's Geology, 69—78. *Lardner's Works*, x. 220—225. See *Map of Rivers of Eden, &c.*, *D. B. N. S.* i. 90 ; and for *Serpent*, *ibid.* i. 103.

B.C. 4004. Gen. iii. 14—24.

- 14 *serpent*. The creature itself, as well as the tempter, included in this doom. *hast done*, been the instrument by which it has been done. The doom of the instrument shall be a perpetual reminder of this event. . . . *cursed . all*. All this, creation suffered in consequence of Adam's sin (Ro. viii. 22), but the curse fell heaviest on the serpent. . . . *upon . belly*. Some think that previously the serpent had organs of locomotion it does not now possess, but geological research disproves this notion. Here we have an old thing invested with a new significance, as in the case of the Rainbow (less. 9). . . . *dust* (Is. lxxv. 25; Mic. vii. 17). Be henceforth regarded as leading a degraded, revolting life (com. Is. xlix. 23; Ps. lxxii. 9).
- 15 *enmity*. From being a type of grace and beauty, the serpent has become universally abhorred, and is employed to represent all that is hateful (Mat. iii. 7; xxiii. 33; Jo. viii. 44; Acts xiii. 10). . . . *thy seed . her seed*. Man fights against the serpent in all lands where the serpent is found. It is also true theologically,—the Church opposes the works of darkness. . . . *it*. The woman's seed, the Messiah, and through him the Church also (Ro. xvi. 20; Col. ii. 15; Heb. ii. 14; 1 Jo. v. 5; Rev. xii. 7, 17). *head* : thy wisdom, power, influence, and, ultimately, thy life. . . . *thou*, meanwhile, while the battle rages. . . . *bruise . heel* : shall inflict a slight injury, and impede the progress of truth. . . . *multiply . sorrow*. "As a wife and mother, she is doomed to suffer pain of body and distress of mind." *husband . rule* : from being his equal, thou shalt be henceforth subordinate. Christ alone removes the curse. Christianity the friend of woman.
- 17 Compare her position in Christian and other lands. . . . *voice . wife*. This was his excuse (v. 12). Not even the voice of an affectionate friend is to be heeded when it contradicts Divine commands (Mat. x. 27). . . . *I commanded* : and no wife's entreaty could repeal that law. . . . *sorrow . eat*. With difficulty, and many disappointments, thou shalt win thy bread. . . . *all . days*. Never shall spontaneous harvests supersede the need of labour.
- 18 *Thorns . thistles, &c.*, without, and notwithstanding thy tillage. . . . *bring forth*. They shall need no planting, but will require constant extermination. . . . *sweat . face*. Labour shall be a dire necessity, not a pleasant occupation. Toil shall become wearying and exhaustive. . . . *dust . unto dust* (Job xxi. 26; Ps. civ. 29; Eccles. xii. 7; Ro. v. 12; Heb. ix. 27). . . . *return*. He had now begun to return. Had become
- 20 liable to disease, decay, and death. . . . *Eve* = life (2 Cor. xi. 3; 1 Tim. ii. 13, 14). Probably in allusion to Christ, her seed, "our Life." . . . *God*
- 21 *make*, taught them to make. . . . *skins*, of animals slain for sacrifice. . . . *clothed*. A lasting memorial of the shame that followed sin; a sign also of the robe of righteousness "upon us" all through faith in the *one*
- 22 *Sacrifice* (Ro. xiii. 13, 14; Is. lxi. 10). . . . *tree . life*, which now is forfeited. Eternal life is now to be sought another way, i. e. through the Messiah (Col. iii. 1—3). To such will be given, at last, to eat of this tree
- 23 (Rev. ii. 7). . . . *to till*, and have in work a constant reminder of his sin.
- 24 *drove out*. To seek henceforth the heavenly paradise (Lu. xxiii. 43), and to be till then a stranger and pilgrim (1 Pet. ii. 11; Heb. xi. 13—16). *Cherubims*, cherubs, angels. . . . *keep . way*. That they might not return to that tree, but find their way to another—the true Vine (Jo. xv. 1—8), the branch (Zech. iii. 8; vi. 12), the plant of renown (Ezek. xxxiv. 29).

Ainsworth on the Pentateuch, in loc. *Kiel and Delitzsch, ditto.* *Perkins' Works, i. 168 (folio).* *Lightfoot's Works, ii. 1303.*

The first Curse—The first Gospel.

- I. THE FIRST CURSE. Till now all was very good (Gen. i. 31). Only words of blessing had been pronounced. God rejoiced in the new-made world (Prov. viii. 31). All would have continued thus, but for sin. Man sinned, and then the curse was pronounced. (1.) It fell first and most heavily on the serpent—and that old serpent, the devil. He had been already ejected from the heavenly paradise, as the chief of the fallen angels (2 Pet. ii. 4; Jude 6). But that was by a Divine power, directly. Even that did not bruise his *head*. Now it is declared that his head (see note, v. 15) shall be crushed, and that by the seed of the woman he had beguiled. The utter humiliation of his pride and power is predicted. Satan knew it was inevitable, since God had declared it. The very animal he had selected should by its habits and relations to man, remind him perpetually of his doom. (2.) It fell on Eve. She should know pain, and sorrow. She should be subject to man. Her wishes be subordinated to his will. (3.) It fell on Adam. He with Eve should be expelled from Paradise. He should lead a wandering life, varied with painful and exhausting labour. His toil for bread should be a constant battle with thorns and thistles. (4.) Through him it passed to us, "in that all have sinned." (5.) It fell on the earth. Noxious weeds and useless plants should be its *spontaneous*, and bread its *forced*, production. (6.) The effects of the curse are visible among all men, and in every land.
- II. THE FIRST GOSPEL. In the midst of wrath, God remembers mercy. He denounces, and punishes sin; but also preaches life and salvation. In this prot-evangel (first gospel) are two grounds of hope, a prediction and a promise. (1.) The prediction assures us of the final overthrow of Satan. (2.) The promise guaranteed the advent of an almighty Deliverer, who though obstructed by the devil and his emissaries, should at length tread down Satan under his feet. Hence if Adam and Eve left Eden with a sad memory, they had also a sure hope. If Adam is inclined to remind Eve that she was first overcome and then tempted him, he shall also remember that through that same Eve the "restorer of the breach" shall come also. This promise was like the rainbow after the storm. It was a bright light in the dark cloud. A radiant star in the night of remorse. A flower carried away from the withered bowers of innocence. A true "heart's-ease" to bloom in life's rugged pathway as an antidote against "heart-trouble" the wide world over. What had life now been without this promise,—what were life to us without its fulfilment? The promise *given* helped them to endure the wilderness; the promise *fulfilled* makes our wilderness to blossom as the rose.
- LEARN—
- I. How intensely God hates sin. The curse and its consequences regarded as the measure of this anger.
- II. How wonderful the wisdom that conceived, and the mercy and power that wrought out, such a method of recovery.

B.C. 3875. Gen. iv. 1—17.

- 1 *Cain* = a possession. Her first-born was her "treasure." So called out of affection and gratitude (Ps. cxxvii. 3). Earthly possessions and
- 2 treasures are often, like C., the causes of trouble. . . . *Abel* = a breath; vanity (Ps. xxxix. 5). . . . *keeper* = shepherd. . . . *sheep*, including goats also (Lev. i. 10; Mat. xxv. 32). . . . *tiller* = cultivator (fr. A.S. *tilia*).
- 3 *process . time*, lit. 'end of days.' It may have been on the Sabbath, or time of gathering fruits of shepherding and husbandry. . . . *brought*. Recognizing the existence and claims of Jehovah. Having, doubtless, been taught this duty by the precept and example of Adam. . . . *offering*. It might be a thank-offering, but was not a sin-offering. See Rev. xii. 8; hence thus early was a lamb, and not fruits, the proper and "acceptable sacrifice." In Cain's offering there was the expression of gratitude, but
- 4 not of contrition, and of faith in the Lamb of God. . . . *firstlings* = first offspring, i. e. a lamb. The appointed sacrifice and a type of the Messiah. *respect*. The reason is shown in Heb. xi. 4. The sacrifice in itself was
- 5 more excellent, and expressed right views of sin, and God. . . . *Cain*, because he had no sense of sin. . . . *offering*, not of Divine appointment. *not respect*. It was rejected. It is likely that there was a visible sign of acceptance, as fire from heaven to consume the sacrifice (Lev. ix. 24; 1 Ch. xxi. 26; 2 Ch. vii. 1; 1 Ki. xviii. 38). . . . *wroth*, with Abel. Abel not to blame. Cain's sacrifice had not been accepted, even if Abel's had
- 6 not been offered. . . . *Lord said*. He might have punished without expostulation, and left Cain to discover the reason. This mild reproof properly received would have saved Cain from his great sin (Prov. xv. 5, 10; vi. 23). . . . *doest well*: offering the right sacrifice, in the right spirit. *accepted*, lifted up, forgiven. . . . *sin*, i. e. a sin-offering (Hos. iv. 8; 2 Cor. v. 21; Heb. ix. 28). . . . *lieth . door*, is close at hand for thee to offer. . . . *desire . rule*. A promise follows the precept. Cain, the first-
- 8 born, shall have the ascendancy if he does right. . . . *talked*: evidently much was said. What, is not known. . . . *in . field*, whither, acc. to several MSS., he had invited him. Some remote and solitary spot. . . .
- 9 *slew*. Why? see 1 Jo. iii. 12. . . . *Lord*, who heard the words and saw the deed. . . . *said*: He still speaks, before he punishes. . . . *Where, &c.* (Ps. ix. 12). . . . *know not* (Jo. viii. 44). . . . *keeper*? Yes. As Abel was
- 10 his. We have to keep and care for each other. . . . *voice* (Mat. xxiii. 35, 36), crying for vengeance. The blood of Jesus cries for mercy on his
- 11 murderers (Lu. xxiii. 34; Heb. xii. 24; Rev. vi. 10). . . . *earth*, which he tilled. Sin converts a means of blessing into an instrument of punish-
- 12 ment. . . . *strength*, fruit. . . . *fugitive*, dreading vengeance. . . . *vaga-*
- 13,14 *bond*, a wanderer. . . . *punishment, &c.*: see *marg.* . . . *Behold, &c.* Here, again (as iii. 10), fear follows sin. . . . *shall slay* (ix. 6; Num.
- 15 xxxv. 19, 21, 27). . . . *Lord said*. He shows mercy even to Cain. . . . *mark*. Not a brand on his forehead. Regarded with preserving care.
- 16 *presence of . Lord*. The place of worship (1 Ch. xvi. 29; Ps. xevi. 8).
- 17 *Nod* = wandering. Sit. unknown. . . . *wife*. She was the partner of his flight. Cain at this time not less than 125 years of age; and may have had children. . . . *Enoch* = instructed, dedicated. The name suggestive of Cain's repentance. . . . *builded . city*. His wanderings over. The building of a city, and the name of his son, seem to intimate that he had not only repented, but found mercy, and been delivered from fear.

The first Family—Sacrifice—Death—Murderer.

- I. THE FIRST FAMILY. (1.) Adam the husband of *one* wife. If Polygamy were ever needful it was at this time. "And wherefore one?" Mal. ii. 14. God could easily provide more. He had the residue of the Spirit. He would have all thought and affection concentrated upon the children of one pair, and "a godly seed" (Ezra ix. 2; 1 Cor. vii. 14) raised up without rivalry and jealousy. (2.) The two sons. Note their names and the significance of their meaning. The children of the same parents, yet how unlike in character and history! This often the case in households. (3.) Hopes of parents blighted. One child murdered, the other a murderer. So soon did sin work out its results. (4.) There were daughters also born to Adam. Intermarriages between brothers and sisters at this time allowed.
- II. THE FIRST RECORDED SACRIFICE. The need of sacrifice felt, and the nature of it revealed. Without doubt Adam had often offered sacrifices in the presence of his children. From him they learned *what to select*, and *how to offer* it; and the sign of acceptance. Plain from Heb. xi. 4, that both a right feeling and a right thing are needed to constitute an acceptable sacrifice. The right sacrifice without faith, or faith without the right sacrifice, would have failed. The presence of *both* made the sacrifice of Abel more acceptable than Cain's. Cain, a daring innovator. He chose what God had not appointed, and offered it in a wrong spirit.
- III. THE FIRST RECORDED DEATH. (1.) A violent death. Death in any form the occasion of deep sorrow. Such a death most appalling. The more so, that it was now unprecedented. A serious subtraction from the world's population at that time. More, in relation to numbers, than the decapitation of a nation would be now. (2.) Probably unintentional. Cain evidently meditated violence, but not death. Did not know that death would ensue. Had perhaps never seen death, certainly not by such means. His great horror at beholding his brother lying bleeding and speechless at his feet. Hence, a lesson to us on the consequences of ungoverned rage. What has passion done since this event!
- IV. THE FIRST MURDERER. (1.) Could not undo the deed. (2.) His dreadful remorse and despair. (3.) The criminality of the act may be judged by the curse pronounced. (4.) Cain himself felt that though his life was spared, he must leave the society of men. (5.) At last has a son, Enoch (= dedication). May we not indulge the hope that this was indicative of his true repentance? (6.) Ceased to be a wanderer, built a city; also called Enoch. (7.) May we not entertain the hope that though the serpent had done some little harm (comparatively) in destroying Cain's peace and influence, yet that his head was bruised in Cain's salvation? If so, then the rescue of this first great criminal a pledge of the future triumphs of Christ and the conquest of Satan.

B.C. 2468. Gen. vi. 1—13.

- 1 *men*. Posterity of Cain. They introduced polygamy (Gen. iv. 19). . . . *began . multiply*. The increase now became appreciable. The population, though great, probably much over-rated. Not one of those named (Gen. v.) had a son before he was 65; some not till they were past 100 years of
- 2 age. . . . *sons . God*, family of Seth (Gen. iv. 25, 26). They were professedly religious. Such called sons of God, Deut. xiv. 1, &c. . . . *daughters . men*, descendants of Cain. Corruption increased by these marriages (Gen. xxvi. 34, 35; xxviii. 8, 9, com. with Deut. vii. 3, 4). . . . *fair*. The sons of God were ensnared by mere appearances (Prov. vi. 25; xxxi. 30). . . . *chose*, loved and liked. Governed more by passion than principle. Irreligious mothers formed the characters of the young. . . .
- 3 *spirit . strive*. Good men, inspired by the Spirit of God, expostulated in vain (1 Pet. iii. 18—20; 2 Pet. ii. 5; Jude 14). . . . *flesh*. Utterly carnal and debased (Rom. vii. 5, 6; viii. 8, 9; Gal. v. 16, 17; Jo. iii. 6).
- 4 *giants*, Heb. *nephilim*, men of great stature, and prob. of great ferocity, and daring impiety (*D. B. N. S.* i. 183). From the way they are mentioned they do not seem to have been common. . . . *children*, who, becoming like their fathers, perpetuated and extended wickedness. . . .
- 5 *God saw*. He sees always and all things (Prov. xv. 3). . . . *imagination*. See *marg.* . . . *continually*; no time or place void of wickedness, except
- 6 v. 8. . . . *repented*. God changeth not (Mal. iii. 6; Jas. i. 17; 1 Sam. xv. 29). This "language suited to our nature and experience." His visible procedure about to change. The God of mercy was about to introduce a terrible display of justice. To men it would seem like a change of mind; hence the terms 'repent,' 'grieve,' &c. (Com. Num. xxiii. 19; 2 Sam. xxiv. 16; Is. lxiii. 10; Ep. iv. 30.) We often describe
- 7 facts by appearances. (*Ill. sun-rise and sun-set*). . . . *destroy*, blot out *man*, through whom the evil has spread. . . . *beast : man*, the devil's instrument; and *beast*, man's instrument (com. Gen. iii. 17; Ro. viii. 20). The destruction of animals (made for man, Gen. i. 18) attests God's deep abhorrence of sin. Men in their wars often *needlessly* destroy the property of rebels as well as the people. In this case man could not be destroyed
- 8 alone. . . . *Noah* = rest, comfort (Gen. iii. 29). . . . *perfect*, upright. The more observable since he was of an evil stock, a descendant of Cain. . . .
- 9 *generations*, offspring. He ruled his house in the fear of God (Gen. xviii. 19; 2 Pet. ii. 5). . . . *walked . God*, and, therefore, in the ways of God.
- 10 Not in a path of his own choosing. . . . *Shem* = name. The eldest son. (From Gen. x. 21, it would seem that Japhet was the eldest. It should be read, "Shem—the elder brother of Japhet.") The founder of the great Shemitic race; including the Hebrews, &c. He lived 600 years, and was long time contemporary with Abraham (see less. 10). . . . *Ham* = warm, black. The progenitor of Cush, Mizraim, Phut, and Canaan. *Japhet* = widely spreading. His descendants spread over Europe and much of Asia (x. 1—5; 1 Ch. i. 5—7. See map, *D. B. N. S.* i. 90). . . .
- 11 *earth*, i. e. the inhabitants of it. . . . *corrupt*, especially in the matter of religion (Ex. xxxii. 7; Deut. xxxii. 5; Judg. ii. 19. Com. 2 Ch. xxvii. 2; 2 Ki. xv. 35). . . . *before God*, openly, boldly. . . . *violence*: the natural fruit of idolatry. Those who deny the true God, soon slight
- 12 human rights and duties (*Rob. Hall's Sermon on Infidelity*). . . . *And*. The fact that God saw now added to this description of the world's con-
- 13 dition. . . . *God said*: prob. in a vision. . . . *end . come*: time of destruction is at hand (Am. viii. 2; Jer. li. 13; Ez. vii. 2, 3, 6).

The Causes—Universality—and Consequences—of Corruption.

- I. THE CAUSES OF THE CORRUPTION. (1.) *Original sin*. This the prime cause; from this fertile source of evil arose many fruits, each of which in its turn and place strengthened, and intensified the wickedness. (2.) *Pride*. This would be fostered by growing numbers and wealth of men. If they were expelled from the garden, had they not now many and fenced cities? If *two* might be summarily dealt with, many thousands might not. "Thus they limited the Holy One." To this may be added pride of individual strength; which the flattery of others might inflame. The Nephēlim, and their redoubtable progeny would be regarded as leaders and champions. (3.) *Sensuality*. Sons of God and daughters of men. Even to the better trained, mere beauty, devoid of piety, became a snare. The result was godless and ill-trained children, who in their turn became the progenitors of a yet more sinful race. (4.) *Idolatry*, which diverted the attention from the holy God, and fixed it on human qualities, &c.
- II. THE UNIVERSALITY OF THE CORRUPTION. (1.) In regard to each individual. From the heart outwardly through all the life. The heart includes "conscience and consciousness, will and desire, intellect and emotion, understanding and affection." (2.) In regard to the race. ALL flesh. There were few exceptions. God never left himself without witness. (Enos, Enoch, Noah, &c.) (3.) They were thus corrupt, notwithstanding the preaching of Noah and the example of Enoch. (4.) The wickedness of man various. Idolatry. Violence. Violence the effect of idolatry. (5.) Till now, all men spoke one language. And were most likely dwelling not very far from the original cradle of the race. A large district, doubtless, but well defined. Since the Deluge, without question, very much altered the surface of the habitable part of the world; so that now only two of the four great rivers can be recognized, and the great parent stream flowing eastward—of which the Tigris and Euphrates were but branches—cannot be indicated at all; it is possible that the basin of this mighty river, with surrounding mountains, furnished the scene of the Deluge, i. e. if it was, as some think, limited in extent.
- III. THE CONSEQUENCES OF THIS CORRUPTION. God, beholding, resolved to destroy man. Sceptics say the experiment failed: that men are as bad now as they were before. Before it can be said to have failed, its object must be defined. It was punitive rather than remedial. As a punishment it did not fail. The story of the Deluge stands out in history as a divine protest against sin; and as a substantial proof that God is able, when and how he pleases, to destroy the earth in the last great day. To furnish a proof of the possibility of the future judgment seems to have been another object. (See 2 Pet. ii. 4—6; iii. 3—14.) Another purpose served by the Deluge, is to illustrate and certify the reward of godliness. This seen in the character and preservation of Noah. The Divine estimate of sin and holiness one of the most important things for the world to know.

B.C. 2468—2348. Gen. vi. 14—22.

- 14 *Make thee.* Make for thyself. Our Ark is prepared for us. Noah had time to *make* his, and we have time to *enter* ours (Heb. ii. 3). . . . *an ark*, lit. a hollow chest. . . . *gopher wood*, lit. pitch-wood. W. yielding resin. One of the *Coniferæ*; prob. the Cypress (*cupressus sempervirens* = evergreen C.) was the tree employed. It was very durable, and abounded in Armenia. . . . *rooms*, Heb. nests. . . . *pitch*, some mineral P. or bituminous substance, to make it water-tight. . . . *fashion*, size and shape. God devised and revealed the plan, as also of *our* Ark, and of the tabernacle (Ex. xxv. 9, 40). . . . *length* . 300 *cub.* = 525 feet. . . . *breadth* 50 *cub.* = 87 ft. 6 in. . . . *height* . 30 *cub.* = 52 ft. 6 in. (Cubical contents = 450,000 cubits = 2,687,958 ft. and 81,062 tons. Hence the tonnage of the ark greatly surpassed that of the entire English fleet at the battle of Trafalgar. The Great Eastern, constructed after many ages of mechanical invention and scientific discovery, is 692 ft. long and 82 ft. broad, and
- 16 ordinary light draught of 12,000 tons.) . . . *window*, lit. "light shalt thou make for the ark" (see less. 8 on viii. 6). Apertures to admit light. . . . *above*, lit. from above. This may refer to the roof, and mean the 'incline' from the centre was ab. 2 ft., or that the ridge of the centre was ab. 2 ft. thick. . . . *door . side*. Hence it was not a decked vessel; but like a huge
- 17 house on a raft. . . . *I, even I.* I, of a purpose, by special intervention. The flood not the fruit of ordinary laws. "I, even I." Who else could? And if God—to whom all things are possible—then it might as 'easily' be universal as partial. The power required for the lesser was equal to the greater. It may be a question of necessity or likelihood, not of possibility. . . . *earth*. The habitable part *may* be meant. All the earth as known to Noah. . . . *heaven*. The firmamental dome that to Noah would seem to cover, and
- 18 bound, the whole earth. . . . *establish*, make sure. . . . *covenant*, the old promise (Gen. iii. 15). This C. may also mean, "a special promise of deliverance." . . . *thou . with thee*. In all, 8 persons (vii. 13; 1 Pet. iii. 20). Neither of the sons was even born now. . . . *every living thing*: the clean in sevens, and the unclean in pairs. . . . *of all flesh*, habiting the
- 19 submerged land. . . . *two*: all kinds went in by twos (vii. 8, 9). . . . *of every (sort)*, i. e. species, not variety. But the number of *species* in the whole world is so vast, that though the largest cubit is reckoned as the unit of the measurement given above, the ark could not contain the two or seven of each. (In round figures, Dr Duns gives the number of species as follows:—Quadrupeds, 2000; Birds, 6000; Reptiles, 2000; Land Mollusca, 4600; Insects, 60,000. "The difficulty," he adds, "is insuperable." B. N. S. i. 192.) The idea of Bp Wilkins, Dr Hales, and others, that "the species at the time of the flood did not amount to more than 200 or 300, and have increased since," needs the confirmation of science. The area submerged, if partial, must have been very large; the number of species in that district great; and the number of individuals of those species, and their food, required for their reception a vessel of huge size.
- 20,21 *fowls*, birds. . . . *cattle*, quadrupeds. . . . *creeping thing*, reptiles and insects. . . . *food*, of all needful kinds for Noah's household and the other inhabitants. . . . *shall come*. He who first created their varied instincts, would for this end restrain and guide them. . . . *Thus did Noah*. He asked no reason, did not shun the task; but see Heb. xi. 7.

Hitchcock's Geology, 91, &c. Art. "Ark" in S. B. D.; K. B. E.; and T. B. K. Also see K. D. B. I. i. 134. D. B. N. S. i. 184.

 Noah's Warning—Preparation—and Deliverance.

- I. THE WARNING THAT NOAH RECEIVED. (1.) Only one received it. Noah found grace, favour. (2.) To him a most unprecedented and unlikely thing. Beyond that vision, what was there to strengthen his faith? While the evidence to him was so slight, the proofs to us are numerous: (a.) No authentic history of any nation stretches back beyond the time of the flood. (b.) All nations seem to have been derived from one universal seat of empire. (c.) Traces of the deluge are found in traditions, sculptures, coins, &c., the world over (*K. D. B. I.* i. 148). (d.) Conclusive, to the Christian, are the repeated allusions to it in subsequent books of Scripture (see, for example, Ezek. xiv. 13, 14; Mat. xxiv. 37, 39; Lu. xvii. 26; Heb. xi. 7; 2 Pet. iii. 3–7). (3.) Imagine Noah after receiving this warning, with what different feelings he would regard the world, &c.
- II. THE PREPARATION THAT NOAH MADE. By faith. He believed God more than nature, which preached stability; or than men, who must soon have begun to argue thus: (a.) Who is Noah that *he* should have this warning? (b.) But where is the promise or sign of this flood? Nature does not change. (c.) The old man will never live to complete his task. (d.) If he does, how are the animals, &c., to be collected? (e.) Even if they are, is it likely that so cumbrous a vessel will float? (f.) But where will all the water come from? To such men, Noah's *ark* would be Noah's *folly*. (Christ, our Ark, is a folly to many, 1 Cor. i. 23.) (g.) If the worst comes to the worst, we will fly to the hills. Faith overcomes all arguments. 480 years of age when he began, he toiled on for 120 years. While others were growing rich or spending their time in pleasure and sin, he spent his substance about the ark. His sons believed in him, and helped him; and many labourers would aid him for gain, who were not saved in the vessel they helped to construct.
- III. THE DELIVERANCE THAT NOAH EXPERIENCED. (1.) The ark finished. The world comes to look, and wonder, and laugh. Science and selfishness have furnished their arguments, and begin to launch them. On a huge platform of timber stands the ark. Size, &c. (2.) Noah examines his work, and compares it with the plan. He has done his part and enters. (3.) God now collects the animals, &c. The astonishment of the world at that strange sight. Misgivings. Noah, a wise man after all. (4.) Seven days' pause. Time yet for repentance. Mercy in the midst of wrath. (5.) Noah shut in, and the world shut out. (6.) The flood. (7.) The waters rising. The ark swings round from its resting-place, and floats out on the bosom of the great waste of waters.

LEARN—

- I. To take heed to the warning and invitation that we have had.
- II. To work out *our* salvation with fear and trembling.
- III. Noah made the ark to save his life; what are we doing to save our souls?
- IV. Let us fly for refuge to the hope set before us.

B.C. 2348. Gen. vii. 11—24.

- 11 600th year. Here a slight difficulty presents itself. From Gen. v. 32, it would appear that Noah was 500 years old when he received the warning, and therefore that the ark took 100 years in building. But from Gen. vi. 3, it seems that between the warning and the flood there was a period of 120 years; and this period is more in harmony with other portions of Scripture. Probably, therefore, Gen. v. 32, is anticipative of an after event (vi. 10). It is quite certain that Noah's sons were born after the warning; for 2 years after the flood, Shem, the eldest, was 100 years old (Gen. xi. 10). The more wonderful, and a proof of Noah's faith, that the childless old man should work on alone for some years to provide a future home for sons not yet born and their future wives (vi. 18). . . . *fountains, flood-gates. . . deep, waters.* In the earth (Job xxviii. 4, 10; Ps. xxxiii. 7; Deut. viii. 7), and ocean (Job xxxviii. 16, 30; xli. 31; Ps. cvi. 9).
- 12 *windows, clouds. . . opened:* copious and continued showers fell. . . . *rain, and such a rain. . . upon, continued to fall upon. . . 40. days .*
- 13 *nights* (vii. 7), without intermission. . . . *In the, &c.* This, which had occurred before (vii. 7—10), is now again described. . . . *self same, very same* (A.S. *sylf and same*), entered Noah. The Lord invited him (vii. 1). *and Shem, &c.* The sight of his children entering must have rewarded him
- 14 for all his toil. . . . *every beast*, in the proportions given (vii. 2, 3). . . .
- 15 *unto Noah.* The savage without ferocity; the timid without fear (Gen. i. 26; ii. 19). . . . *two and two*, not running from, or falling upon, each
- 16 other by the way (Is. xi. 6—9). . . . *Lord shut him in.* Thus accepting the work by closing the door. Noah did not shut. Only the Lord, by whose power the animals were drawn and guided, knew when the last had entered. Doubtless He who thus brought them *to the ark*, led them
- 17 *to their proper "nests."* . . . 40 days: re-statement of the fact of v. 12.
- 18 *bare. ark:* and settled the question of its buoyancy. . . . *prevailed*, remained, advanced, flowed over all usual borders. . . . *ark went, or walked* (Ps. civ. 26). Floated calmly out. . . . *high hills. whole heaven.* Language agreeable to Scripture usage; words in Heb. and Gk trans. "all" and "whole," often = "many" or "a great quantity" (com. Deut. ii. 25; Ac. ii. 5; Col. i. 23). Although deemed by some to be conclusive, these words do not, by any means, shut us up to the acknowledgment of a universal deluge (*D. B. N. S. i. 196-7; Hitchcock's Geology, 93, 94*).
- 20 15 cubits, nearly 30 feet. . . . *prevail, reach. . . mountains, all known, and within view. . . all. died:* this effect was universal as far as the
- 21 deluge reached. . . . *fowl, &c.* The fierce beating rain, the speed with which the waters rose, the consternation that prevailed, prevented any
- 23 from escaping to the loftier and more distant mountain ranges. . . . *every living substance.* "Universal terms are often used to signify only a very large amount in number and quantity" (*Dr Pye Smith, Serip. and Geol.*
- 24 212). . . . *Noah * only*, of the human race. . . . *they. with him*, 7 others besides Noah (Lu. xvii. 27). . . . *prevailed, continued. . . 150 days.* Reckoning from the time of their greatest height, it was thus long before any sensible diminution of the flood was perceived (Gen. viii. 3), and five months after the rain commenced that the ark grounded on Ararat. Even then it was two months longer before the tops of many of the lesser mountains, or hills, were clear (see less. 8).

Extent of the Flood—Deliverance of Noah—Destruction of the Wicked.

No doubt the first impression, on reading the narrative, is that the deluge was universal. Many eminent scholars still hold to that view. It was supposed to be corroborated by the universality of fossil remains now known to have existed long before the flood. Dr Buckland once held, but afterwards abandoned this notion. Dr Kitto lays much stress on the first impression made on a "plain man" by the history. But a "plain man's" first impression of some other events would be equally erroneous (*ill.* Creation). The sun does not rise and set, though such is a "plain man's" first impression. Dr Pye Smith has sufficiently met this difficulty by explaining the use of universal terms. Taking the sacred cubit as the unit of measurement (as in the Notes), it remains doubtful whether the ark would have been large enough. And at the end of all the scientific difficulties, it is still clear that the end to be answered by a flood would be effected by the destruction of man, who, it cannot be imagined, had by this time peopled every part of the earth's surface.

- I. THE DELIVERANCE OF NOAH. (1.) The warning. (2.) His work : very long, arduous, expensive. Carried on amid much opposition and ridicule. As godless masons often share in the erection of sacred edifices, being paid, so many of the most irreligious might aid in the construction of the ark. (3.) Noah found favour with God. (4.) Only one good man, yet he was not overlooked and forgotten. (5.) The strength of faith. Mightier than science, love of ease, pleasure, wealth. (6.) The ark finished. (7.) First symptoms of flood : rain-clouds, fountains broken, windows of heaven opened.
- II. THE DESTRUCTION OF THE WICKED. (1.) Numbers, learning, wealth, combination, could not save. "Though wickedness join hand in hand, it shall not go unpunished." (2.) Their destruction complete and universal. None escaped. (3.) They were not without an offer of mercy. In 120 years longer, after the warning was given, they were striven with. This was their day of grace. By word and life, Noah preached to them. (4.) At length "the flood came and took them all away." Consternation, when they saw the ark drifting away, and the water still rising. Despair. A too-late repentance.

"Has not God
Still wrought by means since first he made the world"
And did he not of old employ his means
To drown it? What is his creation less
Than a capacious reservoir of means,
Formed for his use, and ready to his will?"

LEARN—

- I. The safety of the Holy. II. The danger of the ungodly.

• "Faithful found
Among the faithless, faithful only he ;
Among innumerable false, unmoved,
Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified,
His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal.
Nor number, nor example with him wrought
To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind,
Though single."—(*Paradise Lost*, Book V.)

B.C. 2347. Gen. viii. 1—12.

- 1 *Remembered*. God never forgets his people (although he will forget their sins, Jer. xxxi. 34; Heb. viii. 12). Com. Gen. xix. 29; Ex. ii. 24; 1 Sam. i. 19. . . . *wind*. He could have willed it, but employs means (Ps. civ. 3; cxlviii. 8; Ex. xiv. 21; xv. 10; Num. xi. 31). A *strong* wind to beat back the rain, a *hot* wind to evaporate the waters. . . . *assuaged*: their
- 2 supply was cut off, and their bulk diminished. . . . *fountains . deep*. Dr Pye Smith suggests that as the flood may have been brought about by the depression of land and turning of river-courses to one central spot, so "the draining off of the waters would be effected by a return of the bed of the sea to a lower level, or by the elevation of some tracts of land which would leave channels or slopes for the larger part of the water to flow back into the Indian Ocean, while the lower part remained a great lake, or an
- 3,4 inland sea—the Caspian." . . . *continually*, without cessation. . . . 150 *days*, from the time of reaching their highest level. . . . *seventh . month*, not of the flood, but of the year. . . . *Ararat*: not *mount A.*, but mountains of A. Ararat = holy land. The word occurs Jer. li. 27, and is trans. Armenia in 2 Ki. ix. 37; Is. xxxvii. 38. Persian name for A. is *Ku-i-nuh* = mt. of Noah (*ill.* Kuh-i-noor, mt. of light). The great A. is 17,300 ft. high, or 1500 ft. higher than mt. Blanc. The ark rested somewhere among the uplands of Armenia, not on the summit of A., from which the descent of the varied inhabitants of the ark had been next to impossible.
- 5 10th month, about 73 days after the ark grounded. . . . *tops . ms.*, i. e.
- 6 of the Armenian highlands. . . . 40 *days*, after appearance of mountain
- 7 tops. . . . *raven* (*corvus corax*): a bird whose glossy blackness is proverbial (Lev. xi. 15; Deut. xiv. 4; Song, v. 10, 11; Prov. xxx. 17; less. 114). Foolishly regarded with superstitious feeling, as a bird of ill omen. . . . *to . fro* (see *marg.*): nothing to warrant the common belief that it did not return to the ark, though it may not have entered it. Its delay abroad told Noah that the waters had left the mountain heights which the raven
- 8 frequented (Is. xxxiv. 11). . . . *dove* (word *Yonah* is generic = *Columbidæ*, the dove kind generally): it haunts the lower grounds, as the raven does mountain solitudes. It was probably sent out seven days after the raven (Ps. lxxviii. 13; Hos. vii. 11; Mat. iii. 16; x. 16; xxi. 12). . . .
- 9,10 *no rest*: the lower grounds were still submerged. . . . 7 *days*, from the
- 11 day of its return. . . . *came to him*. Its mate was still in the ark. . . . *evening*. A bird so swift and strong of wing may have flown far even in one day. . . . *and, lo*, a wonderful thing. The bird did not need it for food. A divine impulse prompted this. . . . *olive* (*Olea Europæa*, Heb. *Zayith*): first mention of the O. Will put out leaves even under water. Its flower like that of lilac, and fragrant, but in smaller bunches. Indeed, the lilac belongs to family of *Oleaceæ* = olive-worts (including ash, privet, &c.). Flowers in June, fruit ripens in October. Tree lives to immense age. According to Candolle, the French botanist, the nat. age of O. is 700 years. . . . *Noah knew*, from this circumstance. The dove and olive
- 12 branch an emblem of peace. . . . *abated*, not yet quite gone. . . . 7 *days*, after this second return. . . . *returned not again*: the waters having utterly passed away, even off the lower grounds. Flood began 17th day of 2nd mo. in 600th yr. of Noah's life; ended 27th day of 2nd mo. of 601st yr. Lasted 1 yr. and 10 days. Uncertain if solar yr. of 360—365 days, or lunar yr. of 352 days. The former most likely.

The Messengers selected—sent forth—returning.

- I. MESSENGERS SELECTED. After long floating, during which time Noah would know little of what was passing in the outer world, save that he heard the rain and tempest, the ark grounded. Doubtless he would often look forth on the waste of waters. The rapid evaporation, &c., would very much intercept a distant view. Fogs and mists, &c. Hence to know the state of things beyond the reach of his vision he would send forth messengers. *Birds.* Birds of *swift* and *strong* wing, and clear vision. *Land* birds. Aquatic birds would not have returned. Birds that may be domesticated and having local attachments. Hence they would return to the ark.
- II. MESSENGERS SENT FORTH. Waited 40 days. Time for the waters to abate considerably. Sends forth the raven first, to examine the uplands. Probably after seven days the dove was sent, to examine the lowlands. Seven days after, the dove was sent forth again. Imagine the flight of these birds, and the anxiety of Noah. The raven flies off, direct across the waters; the dove circles round the ark, and at length wings her way over the watery waste. They disappear in the shadows and mists.
- III. MESSENGERS RETURNING. Though Noah might not follow their far flight, they could see the huge ark, to which also their unerring instinct—perhaps supernaturally—would guide them. The raven went to and fro, hovering over the waters and the ark, and sometimes resting on the rocky heights, and feeding on the floating bodies of dead creatures. The dove returns and is taken into the ark. A second time she returns, and the olive branch proves that the waters have now subsided from the lower grounds. The joy of Noah on looking once more upon a branch of olive. One of the most beautiful and useful of trees also.

“There was a noble ark
Sailing o’er waters dark
And wide around :
Not one tall tree was seen,
Nor flower, nor leaf of green,
Nor e’en the ground.
“Then a soft wing was spread,
And o’er the billows dread
A meek dove flew ;

But on that shoreless tide
No living thing she spied
To cheer her view.
“So to the ark she fled
With weary drooping head,
To seek for rest.
Christ is the ark, my love,
Thou art the tender dove—
Fly to his breast.”

LEARN—

- I. Gratitude for that *reason* which adapts means to ends.
 - II. God’s creatures thus employed in the service of man.
 - III. The ark a type of Christ; and the dove and olive branch, of the soul hastening with peaceful feelings and first-fruits to Jesus.
-

B.C. 2347. Gen. ix. 8—17.

- 1 *And*. Noah had left the ark, and built an altar, and offered sacrifice (viii. 20). God accepted the sacrifice (v. 21); and having promised never again to repeat the flood (v. 21), he pledged the continuance of the seasons (v. 22), and now pronounces a benediction, adds a promise (ix. 2), gives certain laws (vv. 3—7), and designated the rainbow as a perpetual sign of the covenant. . . . *blessed Noah*. In words similar to those used 16 centuries before (Gen. i. 28). Noah stood in a somewhat similar relation to the world that Adam did. . . . *sons*. This is what all good fathers desire, and
- 2 all good sons will seek. . . . *fear . dread*. The supremacy of man re-
- 3 established. Founded not on love, but fear (Hos. ii. 18). . . . *moving . liveth*. The use of animal food allowed (Deut. xii. 15; xiv. 3, 9, 11;
- 4 Ac. x. 12, 13). . . . *But*, here is one important restriction. . . . *flesh . life . blood . not eat*. "An undoubted reference to the sacrifice of animals, afterwards made the subject of command, in which it was the blood especially
- 5 that was offered as the seat and soul of life" (Lev. xvii. 11, 14). . . . *and surely, &c*. Man's life is also to be considered inviolably sacred. Here we have "the institution of the civil magistrate armed with official
- 6 authority to repress violence and crime." . . . *every man's brother* (Ac. xvii. 26). . . . *whoso, &c*. (Ex. xxi. 12, 14; Lev. xxiv. 17; Mat. xxvi. 52; Rev. xiii. 10). . . . *for*, this is the greatest argument against murder
- 8 (Gen. i. 27). . . . *And God spake*: renewing these commands and
- 9 promises, and adding the perpetual sign. . . . *establish . covenant*: confirm, bear in mind, make sure my words; this my agreement. Note the condescension of God in making this covenant, and much more in appoint-
- 10 ing a sign (Is. liv. 9). . . . *every living creature* (Ps. cxlv. 9). . . .
- 11 *waters . flood*. The next great destruction of the world, at the last day,
- 12, 13 will be by fire (2 Pet. iii. 10—14). . . . *token, sign*. . . . *set*: not create for the first time, but henceforth appoint it to be a remembrancer of this covenant (*ill*. bread and wine had long existed before our Lord made them emblems in the "Lord's supper" of his "broken body and shed blood"). There is abundant proof in the geological record that the same laws existed in pre-Adamic times which operate now. . . . *bow*, "the triumphal arch" of the King of kings—the rainbow. "The R. is seen when the sun is shining on rain falling on the part of the atmosphere on which the spectator's eye is fixed. When the rays strike the falling drops, they are refracted as they enter them, and reflected back on the rain cloud. On leaving the drops a second refraction of rays takes place; and the result is the R." It is alluded to only three other times in the Bible (Eze. i.
- 14 27, 28; Rev. iv. 1—3; Rev. x. 1). . . . *bow . seen*: and it is seen this
- 16 day as vividly as ever. . . . *I . look . remember*. We look and remember, and it may seem to us that God does so. Certainly he sees the sign, and knows what it reminds us of.

"For, faithful to its sacred page,
Heaven still rebuilds thy span;
Nor lets the type grow pale with age
That first spoke peace to man.
As fresh in yon horizon dark,
As young its beauties seem
As when the eagle from the ark
First sported in its beam."—(Campbell.)

D. B. N. S. i. 237 ff. See Art. "Rainbow" in Chambers' *Encyclopædia*, for scientific description.

The Covenant—the Token.

I. THE COVENANT. “As the Deity has often illustrated his own dealings with men by their dealings with each other, so he has been pleased to use the idea of a covenant—which properly can be entered into between those only who are mutually bound—and to represent himself as standing in a covenant relation with his people. This is altogether of grace. For his creatures, sinful creatures pre-eminently, have no independent standing, and can have no claim upon him but what he gives them. And if he binds himself, it is to gain no advantage: it is rather the exclusive bestowal of advantage and good on those whom he admits into his covenant.” (*Art. “Covenant,” T. B.K.*) This covenant, on the part of God, a promise to the world—through Noah—of immunity from destruction by water in the future. See the terms of it, viii. 21, 22. Contained pledge of protection from all destroying floods: “as I have done;” and guarantee of seasons, &c.: “while the earth remaineth.”

II. THE TOKEN. The rainbow. “My bow.” (1.) *An old thing invested with a new meaning.* To the Christian common things are remembrancers of higher truths. The vine, the sun, &c., speak of Christ. Birds and flowers speak of providence. They are silent on these matters to the worldly man.

“A primrose by the river’s brim
A yellow primrose is to him,
And it is nothing more.”—(*Wordsworth.*)

(2.) *Conspicuous.* The rainbow, an object vast and visible. Spanning the heavens. (3.) *Attractive.* Beautiful in shape and colour. Though often seen, always looked upon with a new delight. (4.) *Universal.* Wherever the falling rain could bring the flood to mind, there the rainbow preaches of the mercy and faithfulness of God.

“Then with uplifted hands, and eyes devout,
Grateful to heaven, over his head beholds
A dewy cloud, and in the cloud a bow
Conspicuous, with three listed colours gay,
Betokening peace with God, and covenant new.”—(*Milton.*)

LEARN—

- I. The condescension of a *covenant-making* God.
- II. The faithfulness of a *covenant-keeping* God.
- III. The obligation we are under of covenanting to serve God, and of keeping that covenant.
- IV. To see in natural objects remembrancers of divine thoughts and truths.

B.C. 2247. Gen. xi. 1—9.

- 1 Gen. x. may be read between *vv.* 9 and 10 of this chap. . . . *whole earth* = the entire race of man (as we put the place for the people: *ill.* "All England is in favour of, &c.;" "The voice of 'Lancashire,' and 'London,' &c."). . . . *language . speech* (see *marg.*). What this grand old original language was, we know not. Many conjectures. Here we are told that the language was one. Speech the direct gift of God. God now exercises his sovereignty over this gift. Makes it serve his purposes. Oneness of speech tended to bind the race together, and to one spot; and thus to retard the peopling of the world. . . . *came . pass*, in the course of time; ab. 100 years after the flood. . . . *as they*, the descendants of Noah. . . . *journeyed*. Probably this was not in the sense of a vast migration; but as the pastoral families increased, they spread out beyond the territory—Armenia—originally peopled. . . . *from . east* = eastward (see map, and com. Gen. xiii. 11; 2 Sam. vi. 2; 1 Ch. xiii. 6). . . . *Shinar* (? land of the two rivers, i. e. Tigris and Euphrates): probably the primitive name of Babylonia. . . . *plain*: to them boundless and mysterious, as unexplored: a strange contrast to the mountainous region behind them. . . . *dwelt there*: they forgot, or slighted, the command to "replenish the earth." . . . *brick*: they had formerly used stone. "Necessity the mother of invention." . . . *burn*, to harden. . . . *slime* = bitumen. "These facts," says Dr Alexander, "identify it with the district afterwards known as Babylonia." . . . *Go to* (Gen. xxxviii. 16; 2 Ki. v. 5): a kind of interjection = Lat. *agendum*! . . . *city . tower* (*K. E. B. L., Art. "Babel."*) (1.) Tradition asserts that being cast down, Babylon was built out of its ruins. (2.) Bockart thinks it became the temple of Belus, described by Herodotus, i. 181. Of several mounds, respectively supposed to be the site of Babel, the most important is *Birs-Nimroud* (des. by Layard, p. 495 ff.). But as yet no remains, more remote than the time of Nebuchadnezzar, have been found. The site of Babel is yet undetermined. . . . *top . heaven*, that is to say, it was to be very lofty (Deut. i. 28; ix. 1). Design uncertain. (1.) Some have thought they actually dreamed of reaching heaven. (2.) Josephus thinks it was to save them from a second deluge. This, after the promise (ix. 11), improbable. (3.) Others that it was to be a monument to guide the wandering tribes of the people to the head quarters of the community. (4.) The most probable notion is that it was intended for idolatrous worship, and the centre of a great warlike confederacy. . . . *make . name*, uncertain allusion. . . . *lest . scattered*: centralization one object. . . . *Lord came, &c.* One of numerous cases in which human actions are ascribed to God (Gen. xviii. 21; Hab. iii. 3). . . . *people . one*, one nation (ix. 19; Ac. xvii. 26). . . . *one lang.*: as a bond of union. . . . *this . begin*. This tower only the commencement of effects of centralization. . . . *imagined* (Ps. ii. 1): if they be allowed to finish it, they will think themselves equal to anything. . . . *confound . lang.*, dissolve the uniting bond (xlii. 23; Deut. xxviii. 49; Jer. v. 15). . . . *so . scattered*: using force, where persuasion was not enough. Those would naturally journey together who could understand each other (x. 25, 32). . . . *left off*: as they could not understand each other; and being alarmed probably by the strange disturbance in their speech. . . . *Babel* = confusion (1 Cor. xiv. 23).
- D. B. N. S. i. 275 ff. K. D. B. I. i. 167. Arts. "Babel," "Confusion of Tongues," &c., in T. B. K. S. B. D. K. E. B. L.

The Builders—the Building—the Interruption—the Consequences.

- I. THE BUILDERS. (1.) *Numerous*. For 100 years the posterity of Noah had continued to increase. The precise date of this event not known; may have been a little later. (2.) *Of one speech*. The old language not known. The effect of derivation from one common stock. Hence present variety of language corroborative of the dispersion; otherwise there must have been many sources of the human race. (3.) *Disobedient*. Had been expressly commanded to “replenish,” i. e. refill, the earth. Evidently designed that this should be done by orderly migrations. Waiting till necessity compelled. Only needy adventurers would go. Instead of obeying God, they lived together. Thus, too, the population of the world was retarded. Men increase more rapidly in new countries. (4.) *United in rebellion*. Thought they might defy punishment. Took advantage of the Divine promise not to send another flood.
- II. THE BUILDING. (1.) *Purpose*. Not to escape another flood, for not only had they the promise, but very few could in such a case escape that way. Probably it was to serve some idolatrous purpose, and be a land-mark around which they could unite as one people and nation. (2.) *Material*. *Brick*. They had no stone in that district. See *marg.* of v. 3. Clayey earth mixed with bituminous matter and dried in the sun. Cemented together with natural pitch. (3.) *Character*. Lofty. Eastern buildings not generally marked by loftiness. This, a grand and solitary exception.
- III. THE INTERRUPTION. (1.) *The person*. “*God*,” whom they thought least of, and practically defied. “*Came down*,” and specially inspected the motives of men, &c. (2.) *The mode*. “*Confound their language*.” Old terms of speech strangely forgotten, and new ones involuntarily used. Imagine the great confusion among the builders.
- IV. THE CONSEQUENCES. (1.) *The building abandoned*. If some speaking one tongue had continued, the jealousy of the rest would have hindered. But so strange an event would confound *them* as well as their *speech*. (2.) *They separated*. Into how many tribes or nations we know not. The most eminent philologists (as *Bunsen*, &c.) find three original stocks, which some even call the Semitic, Japhetic, and Hamitic (*D. B. N. S.* i. 280). (3.) *The earth was more widely peopled*. Thus was the Divine will enforced. But had this been obeyed, without the need of resorting to this compulsory method, how much more easily had missionary efforts, and commercial enterprises, &c., now been carried out. Thus the world is this day suffering through the sin of these builders of old.

LEARN—

- I. The sin and folly of disobeying God.
- II. The ease with which God can punish sin.
- III. The far-reaching consequences of sin.
- IV. No confusion of tongues in heaven. All sing the *one* new song.

B.C. 1921. Gen. xii. 1—9.

- 1 *Now*: this chapter opens with Abram at Haran. . . . *Lord . said unto Abram*. While he was in Ur he had also received such a call at 60 years of age (xv. 7; Neh. ix. 7; Ac. vii. 2). This is the history of the *second* call. . . . *out . country*: not the city of Ur only, but Chaldea also. . . . *kindred*. However strong natural affection might be, they were idolaters (Jos. xxiv. 2, 3), and must be left (Mat. x. 35—39). . . . *from father's*: not to Terah the father, who was then living, but to the son, Abram, was the call given. . . . *land . shew thee* (Heb. xi. 8). Not till he reached Canaan did he know it was the land of the promise (*v.* 7). . . .
- 2 *great nation*. Abram was at this time a childless man, and 75 years of age. . . . *bless thee* (xxiv. 35). . . . *name great*: as it is at this day one of the greatest of historical names. His name at the first, Abram, sig. high-father; on the renewal of the covenant (Gen. xvii. 4, 5) it was changed to Abraham = father of a multitude. . . . *blessing* (xxviii. 4; Gal. iii. 14).
- 3 *bless . curse* (xxvii. 29; Ex. xxiii. 22; Num. xxiv. 9). . . . *in the . all families*. Jesus Christ a descendant of Abraham (xviii. 18; xxii. 18; xxvi. 4; Ps. lxxii. 17; Ac. iii. 25; Gal. iii. 8). . . . *So*, the call having been thus repeated, and this promise of both temporal and spiritual pre-eminence added. . . . *departed*, from the home of his kindred and the grave of his father (xi. 31). . . . *spoken* (Heb. xi. 8). 75 years old. A great age to
- 5 undertake such a journey, and receive such a promise. . . . *Sarai*. She appears to have been half-sister to A. (xx. 12). Her name, which originally = contentious, quarrelsome (*Ewald*), was afterwards (xvii. 15) changed to Sarah = princess. . . . *Lot*, to whom Abram was much attached. . . . *brother's*, Haran (xi. 27). . . . *son*: as Abram was childless, he may—up to the promise—have intended to adopt Lot. . . . *substance*, worldly goods; flocks, herds, camels, tents, &c. . . . *souls . gotten*: children born to their married servants, and other servants hired there. . . . *Haran* (Charran, Ac. vii. 2, 4). A day's journey S.E. of Ur; the scene of the defeat of M. Crassus, B.C. 53 (*S. J. C.* i. 8, 9). . . . *went forth*, at the expiration of 15 years' stay in Haran. In this journey he first crossed the Euphrates (at the ford at Zeugma), whence he was called the Hebrew (Gen. xiv. 13), = "the man who passed over." Ab. 7 days brought him to Damascus. (Tradition calls him K. of D., xiv. 15. His servant Eliezer was of D., Gen. xv. 2.) . . . *Canaan*: where A. entered C. not known. We
- 6 next find him in the valley, where stood . . . *Sichem* (Sychar, Jo. iv. 5; Ac. vii. 16). One of the loveliest, and most fruitful spots in the Holy Land (*S. S. P.* 233-5; *T. L. B.* 473-4). . . . *plain*, lit. oak of Moreh (*D. B. N. S.* i. 300). This oak was the common oak *Quercus robur*. . . . *Moreh* = teacher. Prob. a Canaanite who possessed this spot (*Art. "M.," in T. B. K.*; *S. J. C.* i. 30). . . . *Canaanite* (x. 18, 19; xiii. 7). . . .
- 7 *appeared*, ? in a vision. . . . *seed*: yet he had no child as yet (Ps. cv. 9, 11). *this land*: thus A. knew that *this* was *the* land (*v.* 1). . . . *altar*: and thus, a stranger, took possession formally and in faith, on behalf of his
- 8 posterity. . . . *thence*, southward. . . . *mountain*, lofty plateau of Mount Ephraim. A day's march from Shechem. . . . *Bethel* = house of God (xxviii. 19). . . . *Hai*, or Ai (*Giant C. of Bashan*, 175) = heap of ruins. *altar* (xiii. 4). Did not forget God in his travels. . . . *called*, in faith, for
- 9 support and protection. . . . *south*, towards Egypt, whither a famine presently drove him (see *v.* 10).

Giant Cities of Bashan, 351. *Porter's Five Years in Damascus*, i. 78.

Euphrates—Ur—Haran—Abraham's Faith.

EUPHRATES. Asia, the land of great rivers. Six of them more than 2000 miles long. One above 3000 miles. The E. is 1780 miles long. Historical throughout. Babylon was on its shores, about 400 miles from the mouth. The ford at Birs—a little to the W. of which A. crossed over—is about 1000 miles from the mouth. E., the W. border of Mesopotamia. UR, afterwards Edessa, now Orfah, about 40 miles W. of Birs. Beautifully situated: pop. 30,000. Probably the ancient capital of Chaldea. Many traditions of A. yet linger about the place. Here he received the first call. HARAN, about 23 miles S.E. of Ur. Built by Haran, brother of A. (H. = mountaineer. He returned to Ur to die.) A., at 60 years of age, set out for Haran with his father Terah, &c. At H., Terah sickened and died, 205 years old. After a halt at H. of 15 years, the second call was given. A. obeyed. The obedience of faith (Heb. xi. 8). Consider how his faith operated.

- I. IT SUPPLIED NEEDFUL ELEMENTS OF CHARACTER. (1.) *Courage*. Men were gregarious. Dwelt together for mutual aid and protection. He became bold to go forth alone. (2.) *Disinterestedness*. Might have grown rich on the verdant plains of Mesopotamia. Gave up all at God's bidding. (3.) *Great activity*. At 75 years of age he gave up a life of comparative ease, and at a time when men are usually thinking of rest, he went out to found a nation, in a country that he knew not of.
- II. IT OVERCAME SURROUNDING ATTRACTIONS. (1.) *The love of country*. This, strong in all men, specially so in an Oriental. The memories of the past and sepulchres of his people endeared the place. (2.) *The ties of kindred*. Though he took Sarai and Lot with him, many were left behind, to be seen no more. He went out, "not knowing whither he went," and to dwell among a strange people speaking an unknown tongue. When Englishmen emigrate, they know the land, the people, and the language.
- III. IT ROSE SUPERIOR TO PROSPECTIVE DANGERS. (1.) *An unprecedented journey*. Ancient migrations were usually made along the shores of rivers. Pasturage and water for the flocks required this. Abram's path lay across a desert. (2.) *An unknown destination*. To an inhabited land where opposition might be expected.
- IV. IT LEANED CONSTANTLY ON GOD. His halting places were marked by the altars he reared. He walked not by sight; or the desert, the famine, and the Canaanite, might have hindered and discouraged him; but by faith.

"So Abraham, by divine command,
Left his own house to walk with God;
His faith beheld the promised land,
And fired his zeal along the road."

LEARN—

- I. The obedience of faith is the most perfect and acceptable obedience.
- II. "Without faith it is impossible to please God."

B.C. 1918. Gen. xiii. 1—18.

- 1 *out . Egypt*. The famine (xii. 10) being now over. He travelled due east along the N. borders of that desert where, 427 years after, the Israelites began their 40 years of wandering. . . . *all . had*: servants, cattle, substance. . . . *Lot*, his nephew, whom he protected and cared for as a son.
- 2 *south*, i. e. the S. of the L. of promise. . . . *rich*. Some of which was obtained in Egypt (xii. 16; *S. J. C.* i. 42). Rich as compared with others (*Ps.* lxii. 10; *Mk* x. 23; 1 *Tim.* v. 10). . . . *gold*: result of traffic and presents. . . . *Bethel* (xxviii. 19), house of God. . . . *tent . been* (xii. 8; 4 less. 11). . . . *place . altar*. A place always dear to a good man. Associations of the past, hopes of future and present enjoyments. . . . *first*. When he came into the land, to build an altar was his first act (xii. 7, 8), which, and the blessing there received, has not been forgotten. . . . *called*: he had grown very rich, but not independent of God. Surrounded by
- 5 foes, his wealth increased the need of Divine protection. . . . *Lot also*, &c. He, too, was rich. How much would his connection with Abraham conduce to this! . . . *land . able*. In that immediate neighbourhood (xxxvi. 7).
- 7 . . . *substance*, especially their cattle. . . . *strife*, words and blows (xxvi. 20). . . . *Canaanite*. Descended from Ham (x. 6, 15—18; 1 *Ch.* i. 13—16). . . . *Perizzite* = villagers (xxxiv. 30; *Judg.* i. 4, 5). C. and P. may mean in this connection dwellers in town and country (*Kalisch*). . . . *land*: hence—(1.) So large a body of people would excite cupidity of C. and P., and (2.) The strife of the herdsmen would weaken the resistance
- 8 of Lot and Abram. . . . *Abram . said*. As the elder, most influential, and rich, “and the called of God,” he might have dictated terms. . . . *brethren*. Abram’s great reason for union and friendship. Many find in
- 9 the relation an opportunity for strife. . . . *land before thee*. They were on some eminence: perhaps “the place of the altar;” if so, trace its influence on Abram. . . . *if thou*, &c. Abram’s greatness. Does not claim
- 10 his right: will take Lot’s leavings (*Prov.* xvi. 33). . . . *plain . Jordan*. Valley of the Jordan, from the Dead S. to S. of Galilee. . . . *Zoar* = the little (xix. 19—23); anciently Bela = “lost, destroyed” (xiv. 2) (*T. L.*
- 11 *and B.* 623. *R. B. R.* ii. 480-1, 648, 661.) . . . *east*, towards the Jordan, and Zoar. . . . *separated*: from this step Lot soon suffered (see
- 12 less. 13). . . . *dwelled . cities*, himself living in the city while his herds were grazing around. . . . *Sodom* (less. 16, 17. *R. B. R.* ii. 601. *S. S.*
- 13 *P.* 289), word = burning. . . . *sinner*s: a matter not considered by Lot, who thought more of the well-watered plain than his future companions.
- 14, 15 *Lord said*. Again is the promise renewed. . . . *to thee* (xii. 7; xv. 18; 16 xvii. 8, &c.) . . . *as . dust . earth*, countless and overspreading the earth.
- 17, 18 *Arise*, &c. Regard thyself as the possessor of the land. . . . *removed . tent*, from Bethel. . . . *plain . Mamre* (= oaks or grove of Mamre), S. of Jerusalem. Took its name from Mamre, the Amorite (xiv. 13, 24). (*D. B. N. S.* i. 318. *S. S. and P.* 103, 142.) . . . *Hebron* (= alliance). An city built 7 years before Zoan in Egypt (*Num.* xiii. 22); called also (xxiii. 2; *Jos.* xiv. 15) Kirjath-arba (= city of Arba, because it was the abode of Arba, ancestor of the Anakim). Now, el-Khulil, pop. 8000, 22 m. S. of Jerusalem (*Bartlett*, “*Walks about Jerusalem*,” 216. *T. L. and B.* 583. *D. B. N. S.* i. 320. *S. S. and P.* 164. *Giant Cities of B.* 175); (2 *Sam.* ii. 1—3, 11; iii. 2—5; v. 4—10, *Neh.* xi. 25). . . . *built . altar*. Thus did this “friend of God” mark all his wanderings. Religion, with him, was the principal thing. The altar was for sacrifice. Abram, a good man, felt his need of mercy; a rich man and powerful, he relied on Divine help.

The Altar—Quarrelsomeness—Magnanimity—Worldly-mindedness.

- I. THE PLACE OF THE ALTAR. (1.) It commemorated divine communications (xii. 7, 8). (2.) It expressed a practical faith. He took possession of the land, not by issuing a decree, &c., but by thus acknowledging God. (3.) It attested an unchanging piety. He had grown rich (xiii. 2) but did not forget God (Deut. vi. 10—12). (4.) It denoted a wise householder's forethought. At the first he built the altar near the tent (xii. 8). Now he pitched his tent near the altar. Man's home and God's house should be contiguous. (5.) But these old altars are obsolete. It was intended for sacrifice. "Henceforth," &c., com. Heb. x. 26, and Heb. ix. 11—14. This sacrifice final. No altar now needed. As the altar was a place of meeting, so the word is now applied to Christian sanctuaries, which are (1.) places of sacred communion; (2.) of Divine worship; (3.) of Christian fellowship; (4.) of neighbourly gathering.
- II. QUARRELSOME SERVANTS. (1.) Effect of increase of substance. The keeping a cause of perplexity. Not room in the land. If poverty has its cares, so has wealth. (2.) The herdsmen jealous for their respective masters. Such carefulness commendable. Not very common. (3.) They would have done well to have seen their masters before they quarrelled. Prevention better than cure. (4.) Their strife might have led to serious consequences. The Canaanite, &c., were in the land. They might have taken advantage of this strife. It might have extended to their masters, and resulted in a family disruption.
- III. MAGNANIMITY OF ABRAHAM. (1.) How different he might have acted. The whole land was his. He was most powerful and wealthy. He might have decided without consulting Lot, and simply have announced his decision. How many would have stood on their *dignity*, and vindicated their *rights*. (2.) See what he did. Took his nephew to a rising ground, whence the whole land might be seen. Offered him the first choice. Was willing to abide by Lot's decision, and take what he left. (3.) This the result of a peaceful spirit, and a firm faith in God.
- IV. WORLDLINESS OF LOT. (1.) Did not place himself in Abraham's hands, nor seek his advice. This as the younger was his duty. (2.) Regarded, in his choice, material more than religious advantages. The well-watered plain might suit his flocks and herds—his worldly prosperity: but how the people would regard him and his religion, he never asked or thought. Of more importance to him that he should "get on" in worldly matters, than approve himself to God. (3.) Yet he was a righteous man (2 Pet. ii. 7, 8). Defective piety.

LEARN—

- I. To regard the place of the altar.
 II. To consider the sad effects of household strife.
 III. To think more of brotherly kindness than might and right.
 IV. To seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

B.C. 1913. Gen. xiv. 1—15.

- 1 *in the days*, during the lifetime of. . . *Amraphel*, sig. "guardian of the gods." . . . *Shinar*. The S. part of Mesopotamia, now *Irakkarabe* (x. 10; xi. 2; xiv. 1; Is. xi. 11; Dan. i. 2; Zech. v. 11). . . . *Arioch*, sig. "lion-like." . . . *Ellasar* (sig. "the oak of Assyria"), now *Senkereh*, in Lower Babylonia. . . . *Chedorlaomer*, sig. "handful of sheaves." . . . *Elam*, a district adjoining Shinar; its king C. was supreme over the others (v. 4). *Tidal*, sig. "veneration." . . . *nations*: prob. several tribes, of whom T. was chief. . . . *made war*. This is the first recorded war. . . . *with*, i. e. against. . . . *Bera*, sig. "son of evil." . . . *Birsha*, sig. "son of tumult." *Shinab*, sig. "father's tooth." . . . *Admar*: one of the cities destroyed with Sodom (Deut. xxix. 23; Hos. xi. 8). . . . *Shemeber*, sig. "lofty flight,"—all. to eagle. Note the names of these kings as suggestive of character, and
- 3 com. Jas. iv. 1. . . . *Siddim*, sig. "a depression full of stones." . . . *salt sea*
- 4 (Num. xxxiv. 12; Deut. iii. 17; Josh. iii. 16; Ps. cvii. 34). . . . *served*: hence they were defeated in this campaign of Chedorlaomer and his allies.
- 5 *Rephaims*, sig. "giants." . . . *Ashleroth Karnaim*, sig. "the two-horned Astarte." The R. worshipped this goddess (*Giant Cities of Bashan*, 11, 12, 43, 88). . . . *Zuzims*, sig. "restless" (Deut. ii. 20, 21). . . . *Emins*, sig. "terrible men;" prob. of great stature. . . . *Shaveh Kiriathaim* = plain
- 6 of K. or the double city (Jer. xlviii. 1, 23; Ezek. xxv. 9). . . . *Horites*, sig. "dwellers in caverns," mountaineers (xxxvi. 20—30; 1 Ch. i. 38—42). . . . *Seir*, a mt range in S. of Palestine. . . . *El-paran*, sig. "oak" or "plain of Paran," S.W. of Dead Sea. . . . *Wilderness*, i. e. of Shur,
- 7 bordering upon Egypt. . . . *they*; Chedorlaomer and his allies. . . . *En-mishpat*, sig. "fountain of judgment." . . . *Kadesh*, sig. "sacred;" S. of Canaan. . . . *Amalekites*. A wandering people occupying the country between Palestine, Idumea, and Mt Sinai (Num. xiv. 25; 40—45). . . . *Amorites*, sig. "mountaineers" (x. 16; 1 Ch. i. 14). . . . *Hazezon-tamar*, sig. "the pruning of the palm;" an. name of Engedi, 2 Ch. xx. 2). . . .
- 8,10 *with them*, see v. 9. . . . *slime-pits*: natural fountains of asphalt or bitumen, which, from their mention here, doubtless contributed to the
- 11 result. . . . *remained*, escaped unhurt. . . . *they took*, i. e. Chedorlaomer and
- 12 his allies. . . . *took Lot*, as a captive. Thus Lot suffered for his worldly
- 13 choice. . . . *told Abram*, who must therefore have been a man of some consequence. . . . *Hebrew*, sig. "the man who passed over" (less. 11). . . . *plain*, or oak-grove. . . . *Mamre*, who joined Abram in this attack (v. 24). *Eshcol* = "a cluster." . . . *Aner* = "exile." . . . *confederate*: they had
- 14 formed a defensive and friendly alliance. . . . *brother*, i. e. his kinsman, as in xiii. 8. Strictly speaking, Lot was his nephew (xii. 5). . . . *captive* (v. 12). . . . *armed*, or led forth. Consider what he might have done under the circumstances. Instead of risking life and property, many would have let Lot take the consequences of his worldly choice (xii. 10—12). . . . *trained*, instructed. . . . *born in . house*, children of his dependants. . . . *three hundred and eighteen*: hence an idea may be formed of the wealth and power of Abram. . . . *unto Dan*. Situation of this Dan uncertain. Prob. Laise, near the sources of the Jordan, at ft of Mt Hermon. . . .
- 15 *divided*: made the attack from two or more sides. . . . *by night*, when they were sleeping and wearied. . . . *smote* = defeated. . . . *Hobab*, N. of Damascus, now *Jobar* (*Porter, Giant C. of B.*, 340; *S. S. P.*, 414 k). . . . *left hand*, approaching Damascus from Hermon. . . . *Damascus* (*C. D.* less. 96). This the first mention of D. in the Bible. A most ancient city.

Marauding Chieftains—Capture of Lot—Bravery of Abram.

- I. THE MARAUDING CHIEFTAINS. (1.) Their names suggestive of character. Heads of savage and wandering tribes; having their head-quarters in the plain of Shinar and neighbourhood. (2.) Cause of this recorded war not given. Probably to be referred exclusively to the cause stated, Jas. iv. 1. Doubtless plunder and tribute the chief objects sought. (3.) Falling upon the kings of the plain, most probably by surprise, they were victorious. Levied tribute and returned. (4.) Tribute paid during twelve years; declined in the thirteenth year. By this time the kings of the plain thought they were strong enough to resist; had probably organized resistance. (5.) Chedorlaomer and his confederates march to enforce payment, taking and plundering various cities on their way (5—7). (6.) Battle of the vale of Siddim. The kings of the plain hemmed in and destroyed. The nature of the ground facilitating their overthrow.
- II. THE CAPTURE OF LOT. (1.) He was in Sodom when it was taken (11, 12). Thinking more of material than of spiritual good, he sought his home and companions among these people. He now suffers the penalty of his folly. "He that soweth to the wind shall reap the whirlwind." "He that seeketh his life shall lose it." (2.) Perils arising from worldly choice, and ungodly companions. Young people often suffer through their companions. Are judged of by them. Lot lost the property for the increase of which he was so anxious. He trusted more to the strong walls and untried friends in Sodom than in the living God. "This their way is their folly." "A man's way is right in his own eyes." (3.) A hopeless captivity and poverty are now before him. From what quarter could he expect deliverance?
- III. THE BRAVERY OF ABRAM. (1.) He hears the news. (2.) Summons his confederates. This an alliance for mutual protection and defence. (3.) Collects and arms his trained servants. These, with the retainers of his friends, make a numerous band. (4.) Marches in pursuit of Chedorlaomer. Might have abandoned Lot to his fate. Hurries through the country and overtakes the spoilers and their captives at Dan. (5.) The night attack. Surprise of Lot. Abram to the rescue. The forces divide, that the enemies' camp may be attacked from various sides at once. Consternation and rout of the confederate kings of the east, and the rescue of Lot. (6.) The kings not only routed, but pursued and slain. A guarantee of freedom in the future from molestation.

LEARN—

- I. Evils of war; desolation carried through a great country and into many cities and homes. The innocent perish with the guilty.
- II. Results of thoughtless choice of home and friends.
- III. Friend in need is a friend indeed. Abram prosperous does not abandon Lot in adversity.
- IV. Jesus, the great conqueror, delivers our captive souls.

B.C. 1913. Gen. xiv. 17—24.

- 17 *king*. A term of wide application. The ruler sometimes of a vast empire, sometimes of a single town or small tribe. There were 36 in Canaan at the time of the conquest (Jos. xii. 7—24), some of whom must have been insignificant chiefs. . . . *Sodom*: one of the cities of the plain, each of which (*v.* 8) had a king. . . . *went out*, to welcome and congratulate him as a conqueror; and perhaps to form an alliance, lest the victorious army of A. should be turned against himself. . . . *Shaveh*, prob. near Jerusalem on the N. . . . *king's dale* (2 Sam. xviii. 18): so called prob. from this meeting. . . . *Melchizedek* (Heb. vii.), sig. "king of righteousness." He was an eminent type of Christ (com. Ps. cx. 4 with Heb. v. 10; vi. 20; vii.). His being without father and mother, &c., refers to his priestly office. The Jewish priests being descended from the tribe of Levi. This M. was not so descended, but was of unknown ancestry. Jesus, the high-priest of our profession, of mysterious descent. Like M., Jesus unites in himself the kingly and priestly office. . . . *Salem*, sig. "peace." By some thought to be Jerusalem. But this is doubtful, though it was anciently called Jebus (Jud. xix. 10, 11; 1 Ch. xi. 4, 5), and Salem (Ps. lxxvi. 2). Kitto (*K. D. B. I.* i. 203) is of opinion that Salem and Jerusalem were not identical. *bread*. *wine*: refreshments, which some erroneously regard as intended emblems of the Lord's sacrifice. . . . *priest*. *high God*. A great light in the midst of heathen darkness. Whence did he derive this light? . . .
- 19 *blessed him*, i. e. Abram. . . . *of*. *most high God*, to whom he attributes A.'s success. He thus reminds A. of God, perhaps not knowing he also served the same high God. . . . *possessor*, &c.: a fact which A. also (*v.* 22)
- 20 acknowledges; and one we should remember. . . . *delivered*, &c. All success is from God, and not the simple results of human skill or courage. To him be all the praise. . . . *And he*, i. e. Abram. . . . *gave him*, i. e. Melchizedek. . . . *tithes*, A. S. *teothe* = a tenth. . . . *of all*, of all the spoils that he had taken. This he gave as an acknowledgment of his indebtedness to God, and as a thank-offering for his success. What proportion of the results of our successes in trade or war do we devote to the service of religion?
- 21 . . . *persons*, i. e. those rescued from captivity (*v.* 16). . . . *goods*, spoils of war. . . . *to thyself*, as rightfully belonging to thee. My reward. . . .
- 22 *Abram said*. He confessed God in the presence of this heathen. A lesson for us. Let us not be ashamed of being the servants of God. . . . *lift*. *hand*, as a solemn confirmation of an oath = I swear unto the Lord. . . . *the possessor*. I will therefore do right with what belongs to him. . . .
- 23 *That*, because I am God's servant. . . . *shoe latchet*: the thong that the sandal was tied with (Jo. i. 27); a most valueless thing. A hint to be just in the smallest matters. . . . *thine*, things that once belonged to thee, before the invasion. . . . *say*, &c. Thou shalt see that my wealth comes
- 24 from the King of kings. Can men say this of us? . . . *eaten*, and which therefore I cannot return; of the flocks, &c., we have rescued. . . . *portion*, share of the spoil. . . . *men*, my allies. He would not enforce their offering or surrender of spoil; but leaving them to make their own bargain, was still anxious that they should have "*their portion*," otherwise they might not be willing to assist in any future emergency.

The Triumphant Return—High Priest's Blessing—Division of Spoil.

- I. THE TRIUMPHANT RETURN. Abram returning from the subjugation of the kings, accompanied with Lot, whom he had rescued, and laden with spoils of war. (1.) The aged chieftain, Abram, 83 years of age; hale, vigorous, victorious. Not always that man's return from the late enterprises of life is triumphant. (2.) His retainers. His 318 servants (some, perhaps, left behind). How proud would these be of their leader. (3.) Lot. Grateful that he had been rescued from captivity. (4.) Other rescued captives. Their joy and thankfulness. (5.) The first recorded war ended in the triumph of right. (6.) The victory secured by a servant of God with limited resources. Prophetic of the greater war in which the great Seed of Abraham rescues, from a more cruel bondage, a greater number, who come off more than conquerors through him who loved them. (7.) His welcome home. The king of Sodom goes forth to meet him. The joy of those who have friends and property restored.
- II. THE HIGH PRIEST'S BLESSING. (1.) The approbation of the holy, the most valuable of all human praise. The praise of some is humiliating to the receiver. Woe be unto you when all men speak well of you. To please God, and hear his "well done," the best end to seek. (2.) Melchizedek, a priest of God, would approve success less than character. (3.) He was hospitable, and provided refreshment for weary men. A good man's obligation to one who, for others, had fought a battle in the right. His sympathy with the emancipated. His respect for the deliverer. (4.) He was faithful; and reminded Abram of the most high God, who possessed all things. Men, in their successes especially, have often need to be reminded of this; and that it is God who giveth the victory. (5.) Such a reminder may do a thoughtless man good, and can do a good man no harm. Abram humbly received the reminder.
- III. THE DIVISION OF THE SPOIL. Many would have fought over it, and, if so well able as Abram, would have kept all they could. (1.) He gave one-tenth of all to God. Did homage thus to divine claims and principles in the person of Melchizedek. (2.) Declined to take anything as his own share. Would not have it ever said that any *man* had made him rich. Though none could have said it justly. (3.) Would not impose his rule upon others. Stipulated for the right of other men. Had the power to dictate, but left them to their own free choice. Would not have them coerced by his example, but claimed a portion for them.

LEARN—

- I. To love peace, and only enter upon righteous conflicts.
- II. So to fight life's battle as to return victorious and with honest satisfaction.
- III. Cheerfully to recognize the successes of others.
- IV. To be more anxious about the right and true than about the profit.
- V. To rejoice in the Captain of our salvation, who has conquered for us, and who has rescued us from present captivity and future death.

B.C. 1912. Gen. xv.

- 1 *After these things*, i. e. those recorded in xiv. . . . *word*, commandment, promise, revelation. . . . *vision*: the ordinary medium of Divine communication at that time (Dan. x. 1; Ac. x. 10, 11). . . . *shield*, defence, protection (Ps. iii. 3; v. 12; lxxxiv. 11). . . . *reward*. I will ensure thy
- 2 success, as also thy protection (Ps. xvi. 5; lviii. 11; Pr. xi. 18). . . . *Lord God*, Heb. *Jehovah Adonai* = my supports, pillars. . . . *give me*. *childless*. How shall my wealth, &c., profit? I have no child to leave them to. *Eliezer* = "God his help." . . . *Damascus*, whence he originally came.
- 3 *no seed*, no child in fulfilment of promise (xii. 7). . . . *born*. *house*. *heir*.
- 4 Some servant (xxiv. 2), prob. *Eliezer*. . . . *word*. God compassionately
- 5 removes all doubt. . . . *tell*. *stars* (Ps. cxlvii. 4), which man cannot number (Jer. xxxiii. 22); and in the east, where the skies are so clear, more are visible than even to us. . . . *So*, as illustrious and innumerable.
- 6 *believed*. Though to a childless old man it may well have seemed incredible (Ro. iv. 3, 9, 22; Gal. iii. 6; Jas. ii. 23). . . . *Lord*. With whom all
- 7 things are possible. . . . *counted* (Ps. cvi. 31), reckoned, imputed. . . . *that brought thee*. Let the past teach thee. I, who have begun, will make an
- 8 end (Ps. cv. 42, 44; Ro. iv. 13). . . . *whereby* = by what means, or sign
- 9 (xxiv. 13, 14; Jud. vi. 17, 37; Lu. i. 18). . . . *heifer*, a young cow (*D. B. N. S.* ii. 132). . . . *goat* (*D. B. N. S.* i. 413): like, but larger than our
- 10 goat. . . . *turtledove*, migratory. . . . *pigeon*, domesticated. . . . *birds divided*. *not*. They were interchangeable in the system of sacrifices. *Both* being regarded as *one* sacrifice, each was considered as one half, and laid
- 11 opposite to the other (*D. B. N. S.* i. 341). . . . *And*. Abram, having provided the sacrifices, waited to see what God would do. . . . *fowls*, vultures (Mat. xxiv. 28). . . . *drove*, &c., the sacrifice not for them. In-
- 12 terruptions in our most solemn approach to God (*And. Fuller*). . . . *deep sleep*: wearied with excitement and watching. The need for watching now past (Job iv. 13). . . . *horror*, &c.: awful sense of Divine presence.
- 13 Darkness of night without, and of soul within. . . . *He*, God. . . . *said*, renewing the promise more plainly. . . . *surely*, most certainly. . . . *seed*, posterity. . . . *land*, Egypt. . . . *serve them* (Ex. i. 11). . . . 400 yrs; in round numbers (Ex. xii. 40, 41; Ac. vii. 6, 7); 430 yrs. from departure of A. from Haran (B.C. 1921) to the Exodus (B.C. 1491). (See *D. B. N. S.*
- 14 i. 344). . . . *judge*, overrule and punish (Ex. vi. 6; Deut. vi. 22). . . .
- 15 *substance*, numbers and wealth (Ex. xii. 35; Ps. cv. 36). . . . *to*. *fathers*. In the better land. . . . *thou*. *buried*. Thy body, when thy fathers have
- 16 welcomed thee. . . . *old age* (xxv. 8). . . . *fourth generation*, according to the average length of life at that time. . . . *not*. *full*. Hence they shall
- 17 be borne with for a season. . . . *smoking furnace*. *burning lamp*. The well-known symbol of the Divine presence. . . . *passed*. *pieces*, owning and ac-
- 18 cepting the sacrifice. . . . *same day*. *covenant*. Here follows the substance of the promise concerning the land. . . . *river*. *Egypt*, the Nile. . . . *Euphrates* = sweet waters. All the land now occupied by the. . . .
- 19 *Kenites*, S. and S.W. of Palestine (smiths, or dwellers in nests). . . . *Kenizzites* (hunters). . . . *Kadmonites* (orientals), *T. L. B.* 164. Prob.
- 20 wanderers in the desert between Canaan and Euphrates. . . . *Hittites*, descended from Heth, the s. of Canaan (x. 15; 1 Ch. i. 13). Inhabited the S. of Canaan (xxiii. 3—18). . . . *Perizzites* (villagers). xiii. 7; xxxiv. 30; Jud. i. 4, 5. . . . *Rephaims* (giants), living on N.E. of Canaan. . . .
- 21 *Amorites* (mountaineers), a powerful tribe descended from Canaan.

What Abram heard—what Abram did—what Abram saw.

- I. WHAT ABRAM HEARD. (1.) The word of the Lord. Revelation, commandment. (2.) *Mode of communication.* In a vision. The word of the Lord needs now no vision. How little of the word of the Lord Abram had. But here was a word addressed to him personally. (3.) *Time.* Immediately after the record of Abraham's courage, &c. (xiv.). (4.) *Subject of the communication.* (a.) Encouragement: "Fear not," "shield," "reward." (b.) Promise: "A son." Numerous posterity. Fulfilled in the Jews, but more particularly in believers—the spiritual "seed of Abram." Though not addressed to us by name, as this "word" to Abram, the word of the Lord is for us. Of salvation, comfort, precept, promise, doctrine. A more sure word of prophecy. Do we prize the word of the Lord? seek to understand? practise it?
- II. WHAT ABRAM DID. (1.) *He believed God.* Some men need much evidence and argument before they give mental assent to the word they hear. Abram had little evidence. God spoke, and Abram believed. (2.) He prepared the animals and birds (see Jer. xxxiv. 18—20). The passing between the divided parts of sacrificial offerings, the most solemn confirmation of words and covenants. (see especially Heb. vi. 13—17). (3.) He watched and guarded the victims thus dedicated. Would not suffer unclean birds to alight near them. The profound reverence with which he regarded this act and command of God. His faith thoroughly practical. (4.) He slept. It was in a vision he had heard the word, now in a vision he should behold its solemn ratification. Did not sleep until he had discharged his duty.
- III. WHAT ABRAM SAW. A horror of great darkness had fallen upon him. The hour, the work, the circumstances, filled him with awe. He expected he hardly knew what. The profound darkness would make the light, that appeared, more visible. (1.) He saw a lamp of fire. The sacred symbol of the divine presence. The Shekinah. (2.) He saw the fire pass between the victims. He knew no more solemn confirmation of words than this. God in his infinite condescension adopted the method of ratifying his word, which Abram, adopting to confirm *his own* promise, would have regarded as a most solemn oath. (3.) This solemn assurance was combined with the repetition of the promise not only as previously given, but with detail and enlargement (15—21.)

LEARN—

- I. To regard with thankfulness this record of the divine word which has come to us.
- II. Christ is the true and final sin-offering. The divine presence was in that sacrifice.
- III. God was in Christ, as the lamp was among these victims. And speaking merciful words of promise and pardon to us.
- IV. Christ Jesus is the word of God. Henceforth we hear no man, save Jesus only.

B.C. 1897. Gen. xviii. 16—33.

- 16 *And the men*: the three angels whom he had entertained, at first not knowing their true nature (Heb. xiii. 2). . . . *looked . Sodom*: knowing the fate of that wicked and doomed city. . . . *went . them*: still, "on hospitable thoughts intent," they appeared as men, and Abram treated them as such (Ro. xv. 24; 3 Jo. 6). . . . *the Lord*, one of these three, with
- 17 a special commission. . . . *said*, as if communing with himself. . . . *hide*, Ps. xxv. 14; Am. iii. 7; Jo. xv. 15). . . . *Abram*. From most men God conceals his will, in order to execute it. Whatever it might be, it would be
- 18 safe to tell A., he would not try to frustrate it. . . . *seeing*. Having so far
- 19 exalted him, I will also tell him this. . . . *know*. He knows us all, but not the same good thing of us. . . . *will . children*. As yet A. had none. . . . *household*. Servants, of whom he had many. . . . *after him*. Example added to precept. . . . *way . Lord*. Family religion (Deut. iv. 9, 10; vi. 7; Eph. vi. 4). . . . *cry*. Here, again, great sin is represented as demanding punishment (Gen. iv. 10). . . . *I will, &c.*: this was the thing he would do. As A. would become a great nation, it was well that he should know
- 22 how God would punish sin. . . . *and . men*, i. e. two of the angels (xix. 1). *towards Sodom*: they too had a message of mercy (xix. 12; Heb. i. 14). *the Lord*: the angel who remained was the Angel of the Covenant. Abraham thought of Lot, and would save him, not knowing the purpose of
- 23 the two who had gone. . . . *stood near*, near in boldness and strong desire
- 24 also (Heb. iv. 16). . . . *righteous*. He thought of Lot. . . . *Peradventure*, perchance. . . . *fifty*. Even so many, was a small number for so large a
- 25 place. . . . *for the fifty*. The good preserve the evil from merited destruction. Salt of earth, &c. . . . *far from thee*. From thy nature, thy justice, and love. . . . *righteous, as . wicked*. Both treated alike (Job viii. 20; Is. iii. 10, 11). . . . *do right*: reward the good as well as punish sin (Job
- 26 viii. 3; xxxiv. 17; Ps. lviii. 11; Ro. iii. 6). . . . *said*. The prayer answered (Jer. v. 1; Ezek. xxii. 30). . . . *answered*, growing bold with success (Lu. xviii. 1). . . . *dust . ashes*. A mortal speaking to the Eternal.
- 28 *lack five*. An ingenious argument. Should 45 good men suffer for lack
- 29 of 5 more? . . . *and he said*. The prayer again answered. . . . *yet again*,
- 30 a third time . . . *he said*: a third time an answer is granted. . . . *be angry*. He would fain wrestle in prayer, but would not oppose the Divine
- 31 will. . . . *he said*: a fourth time the answer is obtained. . . . *Behold now*.
- 32 A thing to be greatly wondered at. . . . *and he said*: an answer for the fifth time. . . . *this once*. He would not go beyond this. His human pity had struggled with his sense of right, but it could go no further. . . . *he said*: a sixth answer. . . . *ten's sake*. So few should indeed save that great city. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." "A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked"
- 33 (Ps. xxxvii. 16). . . . *his way*, to execute righteousness and judgment. . . . *his place*; beneath the oak of Mamre. Thinking perhaps that Sodom would be saved, for surely in the household of Lot there would be ten righteous persons.

Importunity—Humility—Holiness—Charity—Submission.

Next to being concerned about his own safety, a good man will be anxious that others should be saved. The Bible contains several examples of this benevolent anxiety. Thus Jeremiah (ix. 1 ; xiii. 17 ; xiv. 17), Isaiah (xxii. 4), Lot (2 Pet. ii. 7, 8), &c., &c. The reasons are clear. (1.) A good man cannot forget his own past life. (2.) He has now a clear view of the nature and effects of sin. (3.) He desires the extension of the kingdom of God. This the case with Abram. (1.) He had great pity for sinners. (2.) Great love also for Lot, his nephew. (3.) A true regard for the glory of God. Hence his intercession for Sodom was :—

- I. MARKED BY GREAT IMPORTUNITY. Importunity an element of successful prayer. Jacob wrestled till the break of day. The blind man (Mark x. 48) cried “so much the more.” Our Lord enforced importunity in his teachings (Lu. xviii. 1 ; see also Lu. xi. 5 ; xxi. 36 ; Ro. xii. 12 ; Eph. vi. 18 ; Col. iv. 2 ; 1 Thess. v. 17). Abram was importunate. Prayed six times, and obtained six distinct answers.
- II. CHARACTERIZED BY WONDERFUL HUMILITY. (1.) Did not presume upon the distinguished relation in which he stood to God. Always referred his request to the will and character of God. He prayed because a good man ought to pray ; not because being good he deserved to be answered. (2.) Acknowledged he was but “dust and ashes” in the presence of God (*ill.* the Pharisee and the Publican).
- III. FILLED WITH LOFTY REGARD FOR THE CHARACTER OF GOD. (1.) He assumed that the wicked ought to be punished. Of this he expresses no doubt. Adopts this as the inevitable determination of infinite justice. (2.) Yet earnestly desires that the righteous may be spared. Would have men know that the righteous God distinguished between the good and the bad. Would rather the wicked should be mercifully spared than that the righteous should be unrighteously destroyed.
- IV. SIGNALIZED BY A WIDE CHARITY. Would fain believe that there were fifty righteous souls even in Sodom (com. with those who thought that nothing good could come out of Nazareth). Still clung to the hope that there might be some, however few, good men in that vile place. Charity hopeth all things. Would sooner believe too much that was good of Sodom than too little.
- V. DISTINGUISHED BY PROFOUND ACQUIESCENCE IN THE WILL OF GOD. Was afraid to go beyond that will. “*Suffer me to speak,*” &c. Went as far as he felt that he dared. Found, as he proceeded, that God would be merciful as well as just ; even to the worst. Was willing to save many for the sake of a few (see Mat. xiii. 28, 29).

LEARN—

- I. To pity sinners, and hate sin.
- II. To prize the righteous. “The *salt* of the earth.”
- III. To intercede for one’s own house especially (Job i. 5).

B.C. 1897. Gen. xix. 12—26.

- 12 *And the men.* The angels (v. 1). . . *here*, in thy house, and in the city. *besides*, those whom we have seen. . . *son-in-law*, &c. The city should be saved for the sake of ten, and now Lot's relatives may be saved for the
- 13 sake of one. . . *bring out* (vii. 1; 2 Pet. ii. 7, 8). . . *we*. These angels had this commission. Angels "excel in strength." . . . *waxen* =
- 14 grown (from A.S. *weaxan*, to grow). . . *sent* (Ps. ciii. 21). . . *Lot*, glad that his family might be saved. . . *spake*: imagine how earnestly he besought them. . . *married*: note the effects of these ill-assorted unions. *Up*. Lot was brief, and emphatic. No time to be lost (Num. xvi. 21, 45). *mocked*: as many have since at the solemn message of God (Ex. ix. 21; Lu. xvii. 28, and xxiv. 11). . . *morning arose*, after that last night of Sodom. Our last night will soon come. Where will the morning find us? . . . *hastened*. The end imminent. No time to be lost. So we should *flee* from the wrath to come. . . *wife . two dau.*: only three righteous in that great city beside Lot. . . *iniquity*, or punishment. . .
- 16 *lingered*: even this good man *lingered*. He left property, relatives, friends, behind. How many have lingered since! . . . *laid hold*: many are saved as by violence (Zech. iii. 2; Lu. xiv. 23). . . *merciful*. Mercy saves, though the means be rough (Lu. xviii. 13; Ro. ix. 15, 16). . . *brought*.
- 17 *forth*, else they would not have gone forth. . . *Escape*: they were unsafe even *near* the city. . . *look not*, &c., with the eye, much less the heart. . . *all . plain*. Be not content with being just saved, but make salvation doubly sure. . . *mountain*. Because the plain would soon be
- 18 overwhelmed. . . *Lot said*. He expostulated, who should have been glad
- 19 of safety at any price. He wanted an easy escape. . . *grace*, favour, mercy. . . *lest . evil*. The way of escape seemed to be full of peril. The
- 20 way of life seems dangerous to doubting souls. . . *this city*, Zoar (v. 22). *near*, to him, and not very far from Sodom. . . *little one*. Did he think it was unworthy of Divine notice on that account? . . . *soul . live* = my
- 21 life shall be preserved. . . *accepted*. Wonderful mercy in hearing such a prayer. May we not sometimes be receiving the lesser, when the greater
- 22 mercy might be ours? . . . *Haste*, not for thy sake only, but mine also. Man a hinderer of God (Mat. xiii. 58). . . *thither*. Mercy my first care,
- 23 then wrath (Hab. iii. 2). . . *Zoar* = little. . . *sun . risen*: so does the Sun of Righteousness arise, with healing beneath his wings, on the saved
- 24 soul. . . *rained*. A furious tempest now commenced, destructive and miraculous. . . *Sodom . Gomorrah*, specially named as the largest. . .
- 25 *overthrew*, utterly destroyed. . . *cities*, those named, and also Admah and Zeboim. . . *plain*. Marks of volcanic action are visible throughout the region. On consulting the map, a promontory will be seen reaching from the E. nearly to the W. shore of the sea. Below this stood the cities. The soil around was bituminous. The slime pits of the vale of Siddim were near. The word Sodom, = burning (unless derived from this catastrophe), may also denote the character of the locality. (The nature and features of the region require to be studied. Hence see *D. B. N. S.* i. 361; *R. B. R.* ii. 601—608, 669—677; *T. L. B.* 616, 621; *Giant C. of B.* 110; *S. S. P.* 289 ff.; *Art. "Dead Sea" in K. E. B. L.*; *S. B. D.*; *T. B. K.*) . . . *looked back*. In violation of the command. Her heart yearned for Sodom. . . *from behind*. Hence she lingered more than Lot.
- 26 *pillar . salt*. A fearful judgment at once overtook her. She a monument of wrath, and Lot a monument of mercy.

The Warning—the Escape—the Judgment.

- I. THE WARNING: (1.) *How given.* The messenger an angel! The deliverance of one man from a temporary calamity worthy of an angel's powers. The great privilege of those who are permitted to save souls from eternal death. We have had many warnings. Prophets, apostles, &c., &c. "If the word spoken by angels was steadfast," &c. (2.) *To whom given.* Lot. Even he, an imperfect man, shall be saved. "Not one of these little ones shall perish." "None shall by any means pluck you out of my Father's hand." (3.) *Its nature.* Unprecedented. Startling. Life and death. Several cities to be destroyed. (4.) *When given.* On the eve of the event predicted. No time for saving property. Life the only thing to be carried away. Presently the time will come when we can carry nothing away with us. Are we now prepared? We may have but a short warning, or none at all.
- II. THE ESCAPE. (1.) *Lot receives the warning.* Informs his sons-in-law. They ridiculed it. Scoffers. Many make a mock at sin. Still worse to make a mock of religion. Many do even this. Their "day is coming." Was there any cause in Lot for their scoffs? Had they not sufficient reason, in his known character to believe him? Imperfect piety has little influence. Probably his influence in Sodom was not very great. (2.) *He lingered.* (a.) *The time.* Not a moment to be lost. (b.) *The place.* Sodom. Sinful and doomed. (c.) *The reason.* Did not doubt the warning. Not doubt, but sinful attachments. Had friends and property in this wicked place. (3.) *Compulsion was needful.* The angels had to lead him forth. Strange that men need to be coerced into accepting a great deliverance. Yet this brand was *plucked* from the burning. Men have to be *compelled* to come in, &c. (4.) Even then Lot did not wish to go as far as he could from destruction, but to remain as near as possible.
- III. THE JUDGMENT. (1.) The people were employed, as usual, in their pleasures, labours, or sins. Did not think their end was so near. So will it be at the judgment of the world. Death may overtake us at unawares. (2.) Lot being at a safe distance, the fearful tempest commenced. Fire destroyed the city, and water soon flowed over and submerged the smoking ruins. (3.) Lot's wife, looking back, was changed into a pillar of salt. None who are on the way to heaven, can look back longing on the world they leave without injury. Old attachments are thereby strengthened, and new occupations, &c., are made distasteful. Such declension displeasing to God.

LEARN—

- I. The wonderful mercy of God for even imperfect Christians.
- II. The duty of thankfully receiving the warning he sends.
- III. The duty that lays upon us of warning men "to flee from the wrath to come."
- IV. God's great love in providing a deliverer for us.

B.C. 1893. Gen. xxi. 6—21.

- 6 *Sarah* = my princess; formerly *Sarai* (?) contentious. Here *contending* with Hagar, she will be a princess in her own house. . . . *God . made*. He had removed her affliction. . . . *laugh* (xviii. 12): a playful allusion to her former doubts (Ps. xxvi. 1, 2; Is. liv. 1; Gal. iv. 27). . . . *all . hear*. Many would hear afterwards. Her child bore in his name (Isaac =
- 7 laughter) a record of her mirth (Lu. i. 58). . . . *Who . said ?* no one; but
- 8 with God all things are possible. . . . *weaned*. Hebrews suckled their children a long time; prob. ab. three years. Samuel was taken when weaned to Eli (1 Sam. i. 24). Children of Levites first received their daily portion when three years old (2 Ch. xxxi. 16). . . . *feast*. A f. at weaning said to be still common in the East. Abraham's numerous household and
- 9 connections suggest a great rejoicing. . . . *son*: Ishmael = God hears (xvi. 15). . . . *Hagar* = flight. Her life a comment on her name. She had left Egypt, had been already a fugitive (xvi. 6) from the house of Abraham. . . . *mocking* (Gal. iv. 29, 30), suggestive to Sarah of future
- 10 strife. . . . *Wherefore*, because of present irritation, and fears of the future.
- 11 *Cast out* (xxv. 6; xxxvi. 6, 7). . . . *grievous*. Abraham was very fond of
- 12 Ishmael (xvii. 18). . . . *God*, the God of all consolation (Job xv. 11; Ro. vii. 6). . . . *hearken . voice*. A mother's instincts are often a truer guide in practical matters of home life than a father's reasons. . . . *for*. He gives a reason for the command (Rom. ix. 7, 8; Heb. xi. 18). All His
- 13 commands are reasonable, though we may not see the reason. . . . *also*. Here is true comfort. A promise from one who has the will and power to make it good. . . . *nation* (v. 18; xvi. 10; xvii. 20). . . . *because*: not for his own sake. So the children of God are blessed for their Father's sake, not
- 14 their own. . . . *rose*. Hence the command was given prob. in a vision. *Early*: prompt obedience. . . . *bread*: a word that often means food in the general (iii. 9; xxviii. 20); not loaves, as with us, but thin cakes. *bottle*. often made of skin (hence Mat. ix. 17). But pottery was an ancient art. . . . *water*, needful in the sultry desert. . . . *sent . away*: evidently towards Egypt, her native land. A sad parting on both sides (Jo. viii. 35). . . . *wandered*, lost her way. . . . *Beer-sheba* = well of the oath (v. 22—33; xxvi. 12—23. *S. S. P.* 21, 148, 159; *R. B. R.* i. 300—303; *L. B.* 557, 560). Most southerly point of Holy Land (Jud. xx.
- 15 1). . . . *spent*: and the well not then dug. . . . *cast*, placed. . . . *shrubs*,
- 16 to protect from the sun. . . . *bowshot*, as far as a bow will project an arrow. . . . *death*, which she deemed inevitable. . . . *voice*, in prayer. . . .
- 17 *wept*: picture this sad scene. . . . *voice . lad*. Concerning whom he had given a promise (v. 13). . . . *ailleth* (fr. A.S. *eglan*, to torment), troubleth (Ex. iii. 7). . . . *God . heard*. Not only do tender mothers, but the great
- 18 God also cares for children. . . . *lift up*. He who spoke the word
- 19 provided the means. . . . *opened . eyes*. Discovered to her the water
- 20 (Num. xxii. 31; 2 K. vi. 17, 18, 20; Lu. xxiv. 16, 31). . . . *with . lad*. To help and strengthen (xxviii. 15; xxxix. 2, 3, 21). . . . *wilderness*, between Palestine and Egypt. He became the ancestor of a large part of the wild Arab tribes (xxv. 9, 12—19). . . . *archer*, using his bow in the
- 21 chase and in war (was about 16 years old when this occurred). . . . *Paran* = cavernous region, S. of Palestine, extending towards Egypt (xvi. 12).
- Giant C. of B.* 301, 324. *S. S. P.* 41, 43. *S. J. C.* 35, 37. *Jamieson's East. Man. Old Test.* 55. *D. B. N. S.* i. 394. *Burder's Oriental Customs*, 49, 60 (Longman).

The Expulsion—the Journey—the Interposition.

- I. THE EXPULSION. (1.) *Of whom.* Hagar, the bondwoman, and Ishmael, Abraham's son. Type of those who are cast out spiritually. Bondslaves of sin, whom the truth has not made free (Gal. iv. 31; Jo. viii. 36). (2.) *By whom.* Abraham; at Sarah's request, and by the Lord's direction. With a human pity for Hagar, he yet obeyed God. The event eminently instructive to us. Servants of the law shall not, as such, divide with the free children the promises and blessings of the gospel: they are for the heirs of Christ, the Son who has made us free. (3.) *Wherefore.* Because of the mocking of the son of the free woman. God will avenge his own elect. Mockers are cast out. Isaac mocked for his childlike attachment to his mother; and the seed of Abraham this day mocked for their attachment to Christ. (4.) *How.* Kindly, pitifully. Food for the journey was given. The bond have their good things in this life. Even they are blessed so far. (5.) *Whither.* Egypt, the house of bondage, their destination. The bond journey through a wilderness to a prison.
- II. THE JOURNEY. Through the wilderness of Beersheba. Drear, desolate, lonely. The home where they might have been happy, behind; before them,—Egypt. A sad picture. The wilderness full of dangers, and could ill supply their wants. The failure of water. The way lost. Thirst in "the dry land where no water is." Ishmael, fainting and weary, likely to die. The mother's solicitude. Cannot bear to see him die. The death of the free beautiful, attractive. Religious analogy. The world cannot bear to see its loved ones die. No hope, &c. The lad moaning with exhaustion; the mother weeping and praying (sketch the scene). *III.* Tenderness of mothers. Duty of children.
- III. THE INTERPOSITION. (1.) *God heard the lad.* He "hears our sighs and counts our tears." Knows what we have need of. His compassions fail not. (2.) *The voice of the angel.* Comforting, guiding. Exhorted to hope and duty. (3.) *The promise.* The lad should not die. The only word that could comfort that mother's heart. (4.) *The well of water.* Gracious provision for the bondwoman and her son. There is a well for the wilderness travellers. Those who have mocked at the free children, who have served the law, are invited to come and drink. (5.) *The bondwoman and her son did not go down into Egypt.* They remained in the wilderness; became the founders of a great nation. God would not have any perish.

LEARN—

- I. The sin and folly of despising Christ and his people.
- II. The mercy of God to even such thoughtless sinners.
- III. The strength of maternal affection, and duties of youth.
- IV. He maketh streams to flow in the desert. The river of life is not far from us: "Whosoever will, let him come unto me and drink."
- V. We need divine grace to open our eyes that we may see this stream.

B.C. 1871. Gen. xxii. 1—14.

- 1 *after these things*, i. e. after those recorded in xxi. . . . *tempt*, in the sense of try : not tempt to sin, in the common sense of the word (1 Cor. x. 13; Heb. xi. 17; Jas. i. 12, 13). . . . *said*, in a vision. . . . *Abraham* : called him by that significant name, to do that which seemed the subversion of its meaning. . . . *said*, at once. . . . *Behold*, Heb. = behold me. Thou
- 2 seest me. That is enough, I am always ready. . . . *thy son*. The child of my promise, and thy old age. . . . *only son*. In whom alone centres all thy hope (Jo. iii. 16). . . . *lovest*, with all thy affection (Matt. iii. 17). . . . *Moriah* = Mount of Appearance. By most writers believed to be M. in Jerusalem. Stanley identifies M. with Gerizim (*R. B. R.* i. 393; *S. S. P.* 177, 251. 2 Ch. iii. 1) (Stanley's view refuted, *D. B. N. S.* i. 389). . . . *burnt offering*. How fearfully must this have sounded to Abraham. . . .
- 3 *early*. Again note his prompt obedience. . . . *ass* : the aged man would
- 4 most likely ride. . . . *young men*, to carry wood and provisions. . . . *third day* : as he dwelt at Beersheba, this mt could hardly have been Gerizim. *afar off*, at some little distance. Gerizim is seen miles away, and it is inconceivable that the patriarch and his son would journey, burdened, so
- 5 far. . . . *Abide here*. Otherwise, not entering into his faith, they might have hindered him. . . . *worship*. He does not tell them how. . . . *come*
- 6 *again*. He believed they would both return. . . . *laid*. *Isaac* (Jo. xix. 17). I. was about 25 years of age. . . . *fire*, the kindling. . . . *knife*, to
- 7 slay his son. . . . *lamb*. Even from the beginning a lamb was the recognized sin-offering (iv. 4). How must this question have gone to the
- 8 father's heart! . . . *God provide* : now, and in the future (Jo. viii. 56). *lamb*. Jesus the true Lamb of God (Jo. i. 29, 36; Ac. viii. 32; 1 Pet. i. 19; Rev. v. 6, 12; vi. 16; vii. 10, 14; xiii. 8; xxi. 27). God only could
- 9 provide this "all-atoning lamb." . . . *the place*. As God indicated the place now, so also in the case of the Lamb. . . . *built*. *altar*, of the stones lying about (xiii. 3, 18). . . . *wood*. *order*, with care. Faith subduing emotion. . . . *bound Isaac*, with fixed and deliberate intention. . . . *laid him*. Isaac yielding : offers no resistance to his will (Phil. ii. 8; Ps. xl. 7; Heb. x. 7). A strong man of 25 years might have evaded this death
- 10 (Jo. x. 18). . . . *on*. *altar* (Heb. xi. 17; Jas. ii. 21). . . . *took*. *knife*, not
- 11 expecting any interposition. . . . *Abraham*. Twice repeated. Loudly,
- 12 emphatically. . . . *he*, the angel. . . . *Lay not*, &c. (1 Sam. xv. 22; Mic. vi. 7, 8). . . . *now*. *know*. God knew all along how it would be. Yet in condescension to us, he is thus described as learning by experience (xxvi. 5; Jas. ii. 22). . . . *seeing*. To what extent do we fear him? What, of sin, &c., have we given up in proof of our fear? . . . *lifted*. *eyes*, from his
- 13 son. . . . *looked*, around. . . . *ram caught*, &c. And thus the Lord has provided, for none other led that ram to the hand of Abraham. . . . *stead*. *son* (Heb. xi. 17—19). He certainly expected to offer up his son. And he certainly believed the promise concerning him (see Ro. iv. 16—22). Hence he believed that Isaac, being offered, would be raised again from the
- 14 dead; as Jesus the great archetype was. . . . *Jehovah-jireh* = the Lord will see, or provide. God did see the obedience of faith of Abraham. He did provide *then* a ram, and in after-times a *Lamb* as the great sin-offering : who being offered, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin.
- Consecrated Heights*, 35. *Giant C. of B.*, 118. *S. J. C.* i. 47. *Lightfoot's Works* (fol.), i. 267. *Dibden's Sunday Library*, v. 333. *K. D. B. I.* i. 261. *Binney's Illustrations of Faith*.

 Abraham's Trial—Abraham's Obedience—Abraham's Reward.

- I. ABRAHAM'S TRIAL. (1.) *Purpose of this trial.* Not to discover something unknown; but to test the strength of a recognized faith. To prove to Abraham, and to the world through him, the strength of faith. "God tempteth no man." To put Abraham in remembrance that a believer's life involves obedience to the uttermost as well as salvation to the very uttermost. To illustrate the gift of Christ; whose day Abraham saw afar off. (2.) *The nature of this trial.* (a.) The sacrifice of a son. An *only* son. A *well-beloved* son. (b.) By the father's own hands. (c.) A son of promise. Through whom was expected the fulfilment of the covenant. In whom this great believer's hopes centred. What is the trial of our faith as compared with this? How little does our faith in God call us to surrender. Yet the "trial of our faith is more precious than of gold which perisheth."
- II. ABRAHAM'S OBEDIENCE. (1.) He did not wait for the repetition of the command, nor demand additional evidence concerning it. Did not imagine he might have mistaken its nature. Did not question the love or wisdom of God. Did not wait till he perfectly understood its purpose. (2.) *It was prompt.* To hear was to obey. Rose early. Prepared at once. (3.) *It was ruled by prudence.* Told no one his purpose. What might Sarah and Isaac have done or said to hinder the execution of the plan? Conceals it from his young men. Would not suffer them to go to the spot. They might have hindered what they might have deemed criminal or foolish enthusiasm. The wood was cleft at home and taken with him. There might be none on the spot. *That* might be a hindrance. (4.) *It was marked by great self-control.* Does not by manner express a mental burden. The affecting conversation with Isaac by the way. (5.) *It was distinguished by an heroic confidence in God.* The Lord will provide. He fully believed he should return to the young men with Isaac. Expected he would be raised from the dead (Ro. iv. 16—22).
- III. ABRAHAM'S REWARD. Having built an altar, he bound his son. Non-resistance of Isaac. ("Jesus, the Son of God, became obedient unto death." "No man taketh my life from me," &c. Isaac, at 25 years of age, might have resisted, but did not.) Laid him on the altar. Took the knife. Angelic interference. The ram caught in the thicket. The blessing. His descendants were to be as countless as the stars or the sand. How great his joy that he had pleased God, and yet had his son preserved to him. Have we this testimony that we please God? His happy return home. The respect in which all would hold the man who had shown that he loved God better than all beside; and whose laws he would obey to the letter.

LEARN—

- I. Receive with submission the trial of our faith.
- II. Cheerfully and promptly obey God.
- III. The Lord has provided. Jesus died willingly.

B.C. 1859. Gen. xxiii. 1—20.

- 1 *Sarah*: 90 years old at birth of Isaac (Gal. iv. 22—31; Heb. x. 11; 1
 2 Pet. iii. 5, 6; Num. xxvi. 46). . . . *Kirjath-arba* = city of Arba. Acc. to
 Jews, = city of four, because Adam, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, were buried
 there (xxiii. 2; xxxv. 27; Jos. xiv. 15; Jud. i. 10). . . . *Hebron* =
 alliance; very ancient. Built 7 years before Zoan (Num. xiii. 22). 22
 m. S. of Jerusalem. Now *el-Khulil*; pop. 7000 (*T. L. B.* 583; *S. S. P.*
 164, 100, 513; *R. B. R.* i. 315; ii. 430—462). . . . *came*, from his own to
 3 Sarah's tent (xviii. 9). . . . *Heth*, a son of Canaan (x. 15). . . . *sons of*
 4 *Heth* = Hittites. . . . *stranger* (xvii. 18; 1 Ch. xx. 15; Ps. cx. 12; Heb.
 xi. 9, 13). A modest address for one so mighty. . . . *give* (Ac. vii. 5), God
 had already given him the land to *live* in, yet he would buy a sepulchre
 5 therein. By *give* he means *sell* (*v.* 9). . . . *of Heth*. Although Abraham
 6 was but a stranger, they answer with respect. . . . *my lord*, more than
 mere courtesy. . . . *mighty prince* = Heb. prince of God. One whom God
 7 had made great (xiii. 2; xiv. 14; xxi. 22, 23; xxiv. 35). . . . *stood*.
 8 *bowed*. Answered with equal courtesy. . . . *Ephron* = fawn-like. . . .
 9 *Zohar* = whiteness. A Hittite (xxv. 9). . . . *give*. Whatever the price,
 a burial-place for his wife would, for its preciousness, be as a gift. . . .
Machpelah = portion. Here were buried Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah,
 Jacob, Leah (xlix. 29—32; i. 12, 13). The Syrians are still ceremonious
 in buying and selling (*T. L. B.* 577—579). The cave still exists.
 Enclosed by a building 200 ft long, 150 ft broad, 60 ft high (*R. B. R.*
 ii. 433 ff.; *S. J. C.* 484). . . . *money*. Thus anciently used as means of
 10 exchange (xiii. 2; xx. 16). . . . *audience*, Heb. ears. . . . *went . gate* (xix.
 11 1; xxxiv. 20, 24; Ruth iv. 4). . . . *give I thee*. A mere ceremonious
 12 offer. He would not fix a price (2 Sam. xxiv. 21—24). . . . *bowed*. The
 13 sale thus ceremoniously continued. . . . *give . money*. It shall be a purchase,
 15 not a gift. . . . 400 *shekels*. Jewish shekel was about half-a-crown.
 Hence the value of the field and cave, in our money, was about £50. . . .
 16 *what . that ?* A mere trifle. . . . *weighed*. That the value might thus be
 tested, as well as by number (Jer. xxxii. 9). . . . *current money*, ordinary
 coinage. . . . *merchant*, such as was used in all purchases. This is the
 17 first purchase recorded in the Bible. . . . *Mamre*. Here evidently another
 name for Hebron. . . . *made sure*. The bargain was transacted in the
 18 presence of many witnesses (*v.* 18). . . . *possession*. Though all the land
 was his as the gift of God, the first that he really possessed was this burial-
 place. . . . *all . in . gate*. All the inhabitants of the city, i. e. Hebron.
 19 *after this*. Having by purchase made the field and cave his beyond all
 dispute. . . . *buried*. Abraham, 137 years old, at the grave of his wife, a
 melancholy sight. Death severs the most cherished companionships. Yet
 there is One who has conquered death, broken the sceptre of the King of
 Terrors, and brought death and immortality to life. Jesus is the Prince of
 Life and the King of Glory. He has prepared a place, where those who
 love him may be united in sweet friendship for ever.

Wylie's "Scenes from the Bible," 115, 123. Macduff's "Sunsets on the
 Hebrew Mountains," 9. Land and the Book (Thompson), 106, 577—582.
K. D. B. I. i. 265. Burder's "Oriental Customs," 397 (Longman). Stan-
 ley's "Sermons in the East," 141.

The Death—the Grave—the Burial.

- I. THE DEATH. (1.) Of *Sarah*,—princess. Kings and great men die. Appointed to all men. "Wealth cannot deliver in the day of his power." One of the most remarkable of the women of the Bible. (2.) *The wife of a great man*. Derives her chief dignity from this connection. Little expected the honour that would befall her from this marriage. The source of Abraham's joy, as well as the occasion of some of his sins. (3.) *The mother of the free*. The ancestress of Jesus, and those who believe in him. (4.) *Died at Hebron*=alliance. The alliance with Abraham dissolved, and her eternal alliance with Abraham's God, and one who was before Abraham (Jo. viii. 58), now inaugurated. Happy are those who compose the bride—the Lamb's wife; the day of death is with them the day of their espousals. The alliances of earth, abandoned for a better and more lasting one.
- II. THE GRAVE. (1.) *A cave*. We are of the earth, earthy. Dust, and must return to dust. We have to dig a cave, or hollow place, in the earth; here was one already prepared. (2.) *Purchased*. Abraham selected one that would receive his own remains. ("The family meeting-place" is an epitaph at Pere la Chaise). Men sometimes think more of their sepulchres than of death; and make greater preparation for the temporary repose of the body than the eternal rest of the soul. It was all that Abraham purchased of the promised land. The country was given to the living. The promised land of heaven for the living is a free gift, and there will be no bargaining for graves there. Man *sells* a place for the dead, God *gives* a home for the living (see "*Thanatopsis*" by Bryant the poet).
- III. THE BURIAL. "That I may bury my dead out of my sight." The object that once most pleased the eye must be put "out of sight," as a loathsome thing. Life, a fountain of beauty and attractiveness. How glorious that world must be where they die no more, and are never put out of sight. Those who die in the Lord, and are put out of sight, will presently be in sight for ever. The aged man before the grave of his wife. The parting is not for long. A few more steps, and he will be at home with his princess for ever. God, not the God of the dead, but of the living. The "pious dead" live with him. But with all this Christian hope, the loss of dear friends, and the sundering of long companionships, is painful. At such times may we be able to say "Thy will be done."

LEARN—

- I. The great, and good, and best loved must die.
- II. The earthly dissolution may be the beginning of our eternal union.
- III. It is little this world can furnish us besides a place to lie down in at the end of the journey.
- IV. Happy are those who, being saved themselves, have a good hope of meeting those who are "*not lost, but gone before.*"

B.C. 1856. Gen. xxiv. 10—28.

- 10 *servant*. Some faithful and sagacious servant, who could be intrusted with so delicate a mission. It may have been Eliezer of Damascus, Abraham's steward (xv. 2); and this is the more likely from what follows. . . . *ten*: sufficient to show that his master was a man of substance, and to carry what was needful. . . . *camels*. Two kinds: the Arabian (one hump), Bactrian (two humps). (Dromedary stands in same relation to camel, as race-horse to dray-horse). Arabians call them "ships of the desert." Will carry burdens weighing 1000 lbs. Their spongy foot adapted to the yielding sand and hot rocky ground. They are very hardy, will live long on the prickly shrubs of the desert. Drink enough water at once to last them many days; having a cellular, sponge-like stomach, in which it is retained for use. The hump, too, seems to be a reserve of food. Its waste nourishes the body when food is scarce. . . . *Mesopotamia*, lit. land between the rivers, i. e. R. Tigris and R. Euphrates. . . . *city*. *Nahor*, in the N. of M. Haran (less. 11); N. son of Terah, and bro. of Abram
- 11 (called Nachor, Josh. xxiv. 2). . . . *kneel*: the c. is taught to kneel to be laden and unladen. . . . *well*: wells were highly valued, and those who dug them reckoned public benefactors (xxi. 25—31; xxvi. 14—33; Jud. vii.
- 12 1; Jo. vi. 6). . . . *the time* (Exod. ii. 16; 1 Sam. ix. 11). . . . *God*. *Abraham*, God of covenant and promise. By this title God was addressed for ages. . . . *speed* = fortune (A.S. *spēdan* = to prosper); (Neh. i. 11; Ps. xxvii. 5). He trusted more to God than to his own wisdom. . . . *I stand*. *well* (xxix. 9): I have come to the best place, but can do more. . .
- 14 *to pass*. He asks for a sign. . . . *the damsel*. He was sure the damsel would be among the women. The one who responded to his request, he desired might be the one of whom he was in quest. . . . *thereby* (Jud. vi.
- 15 17, 37; 1 Sam. vi. 7; xiv. 10; xx. 7). . . . *Rebekah* = enchaining, ensnaring. . . . *Bethuel* (xxv. 20; xxviii. 2, 5). . . . *Milcah* = adviser (xi.
- 16 29; xxii. 23). . . . *very fair* (xxvi. 7; Prov. xxxi. 30; 1 Pet. iii. 3). . . . *down*: steps or decline to the receptacle provided for the water of the
- 17 spring. . . . *ran*, hastened with joy, believing his mission near its accom-
- 18 plishment. . . . *my lord*: not only fulfilled the sign, but with true courtesy
- 19 (1 Pet. iii. 8; iv. 9). . . . *let down*, from her head or shoulder. . . . *I will*
- 20 *draw*: kind as well as courteous to this stranger. . . . *hasted*. "He gives
- 21 twice who quickly gives." . . . *wondering*, at her kindness and condescen-
- 22 sion. . . . *wit* = know (A.S. *witan*, to know). . . . *earring*, see *marg.* (Ex. xxxii. 2, 3; Is. iii. 19—21; Ez. xvi. 11, 12). . . . *half shekel (golden)*: a
- 23 silver s. = 264 grains; and a gold s. = 132. . . . *Whose daughter?* The wife of Isaac was to be of Abraham's kinsmen. The sign was fulfilled; if
- 24 she were a kinswoman also, no doubt would remain. . . . *And she said, &c.*
- 25 Hence she was a kinswoman. . . . *moreover*. The kindness of Rebekah increases, and was unexpectedly rewarded by the presents given by the
- 26 stranger. . . . *bowed*, in thankfulness (v. 52; Ex. iv. 31). . . . *Blessed, &c.* (Ex. xviii. 10; Ru. iv. 14; 1 Sam. xxv. 32, 39; 2 Sam. xviii. 28; Lu.
- 27 i. 68). . . . *mercy* (xxxii. 10; Ps. xcvi. 3). . . . *way*, of obedience and duty. . . . *led* (v. 48). He acknowledges the providential guidance of
- 28 God. . . . *house* = the family. Whom he thus discovered. . . . *ran*, in wonder and delight. . . . *mother's house*. The women's apartments as distinct from the men's.

Camel, D. B. N. S. i. 306, 44.; ii. 78, 218; *Eastern Man.* (Jamieson), *Old Test.*, 24. *Eliezer*, *ibid.* 34. S. J. C. 37—39. K. D. B. I. i. 272.

Eliezer's Mission—Eliezer's Journey—Eliezer's Suit.

- I. ELIEZER'S MISSION. (1.) *Representative*. Went as the representative of Abraham. "Abraham was old, and well stricken in years." Not so well able as formerly to undertake a journey across this desert. Besides, for reasons of policy it was better that he should send, than go. Better, too, that he should remain and guard Isaac. Suggestive of the value of this servant, and the confidence reposed in him, that *he* should be selected to represent such a man as Abraham. (2.) *Delicate*. Scarcely any mission could require greater tact and judgment. Eliezer must have been known to his master as a prudent man. (3.) *Important*. The wife of Isaac was to hand down the covenant promise to Isaac's children. Eliezer must to some extent at least have entered into Abraham's religious feelings and views. (4.) *Successful*. This because Eliezer throughout sought the divine guidance and blessing, while he used all proper human means. "Our best-concerted schemes are vain, unless the Lord conduct the plan."
- II. ELIEZER'S JOURNEY. (1.) *His company* consisted of the men who went with him, and the ten camels laden with presents, &c. The ten camels were intended, doubtless, not only to express the circumstances and wealth of his master, but also to convey the bride and her personal possessions to her husband. The men needful to look after the camels, and also to protect Eliezer and the presents. (2.) *His destination*. Many days' journey across a wilderness inhabited by warlike tribes, to the city of Nahor. Great skill required in making a safe journey. (3.) *His arrival*. Rests outside the town, where was a well (11). *His reliance on God*. Here he offered a prayer (12—14). God heard the prayer and conducted to the spot a damsel who in all things fulfilled Abraham's desire (4) and his own wish (14).
- III. ELIEZER'S SUIT. (1.) *The approach of Rebekah*. Her coming providentially ordered in answer to prayer. Though beautiful (16), she seems not to have been vain. And whatever the circumstances of her family, she conformed to the primitive habits of the people. Went to draw water for household purposes. (2.) *The request of Eliezer*. Putting her to the test. Was the sign to be fulfilled by her? She cheerfully complied. Told the story of her kindred. (3.) *The presents*. Such as a bride might expect to receive. Her acceptance of them promised a favourable compliance with the suit. (4.) *Eliezer's gratitude to God*. He worshipped (26).

LEARN—

- I. Faithful servants a great blessing in households.
- II. All undertakings should be conducted in the fear of God.
- III. God gives "journeying mercies" to the faithful.
- IV. God is to be praised for all our successes.

B.C. 1856. Gen. xxiv. 49—67.

- 49 *And now.* The stranger circumstantially narrated the incidents of, and that led to, his interview with Rebekah. Stated who he was, and whence he came, and his object. . . . *deal* (A.S. *dælan* = to distribute), act. . . .
- 50 *kindly* (xlvi. 29; Josh. ii. 14). . . . *Laban* = white (Lebanon, *white* mountain), Rebekah's brother (v. 29). . . . *proceedeth*. *Lord.* We should be willing to associate our life with the Will of God (Ps. cxviii. 23; Matt. xxi. 42; Mar. xii. 11). . . . *bad . good.* We are in the hand of God.
- 51 Taken by surprise, they preferred silence (xxxi. 34). . . . *Rebekah* (xv. 15). Let her decide. . . . *take her.* It was not usual in contracting marriages in the East very much to consult the young people. . . . *Lord . spoken.*
- 52 They acknowledged that it was of His ordering. . . . *worshipped*: acknowledging the providential termination of his suit. . . . *jewels.* Abraham had well provided him with marriage presents (Ex. iii. 22; xi. 2; xii. 35). . . . *gave also*: as pledges of his master's wealth, and love for his kindred. . . .
- 54 *precious things* (2 Ch. xxi. 3; Ez. i. 6). . . . *Send . away.* Having performed his duty, he was anxious to report. . . . *few days*: not only would they seem too ready to conclude the contract; but would affectionately
- 56 delay Rebekah's departure (Jud. xiv. 8). . . . *go . master.* Whom he
- 57 knew would be anxious. . . . *said*: they again defer to Rebekah. Happy
- 58 are the parents who have reason to trust their children. . . . *I will go.* Pleased with the presents, with her new prospects; and feeling that as the
- 59 parting must soon come, it might be at once. . . . *nurse,* Deborah.
- 60 Evidently much beloved. See *marg.* of xxxv. 8. . . . *be thou, &c.* (xvii. 16). . . . *possess . gate* = triumph over their enemies. The gate of a city being its chief strength, its market, court of justice, &c. Hence use of term "gate" (Matt. xvi. 18; Ps. lxi. 12; cxii. 5; Prov. xxii. 22; Esth. v. 9). . . . *rode . camels,* on a peculiar kind of saddle. Motion of camel most uncomfortable. Somewhat like the roll of a ship. . . . *followed . man.* Who as guide walked in front. . . . *went . way.* Glad that so far his
- 62 delicate mission had succeeded. . . . *well* (xvi. 14; xxv. 11). . . . *Lahairoi* = the Living One that sees me: where the angel appeared to Hagar.
- 63 Betw. Kadesh and Bered. The same *Living One* sees us. . . . *meditate, marg. pray* (Josh. i. 8; Ps. i. 2; lxxvii. 12; cxix. 15; cxliii. 5). . . . *field* = open country. . . . *eventide.* "The still hour." . . . *camels . coming.*
- 64 But he knew not the treasure they brought him. . . . *saw Isaac.* A stranger respecting whom she made inquiry. Were her suspicions excited
- 65 by his walking to meet her? . . . *lighted* (Josh. xv. 18). . . . *master.* By which she knew that he was Isaac. . . . *vail,* from modesty, in the presence of one to whom she was betrothed (xii. 14; xxix. 10; 1 Sam. i. 12; Prov. vii. 13; 1 Cor. xi. 4—16). It might also be as a sign that she held herself betrothed, since it was not the custom for Hebrew women to go veiled, save
- 66 on occasions. . . . *told Isaac.* Rebekah's presence confirming what he
- 67 said. . . . *Sarah's tent.* Sarah being dead, it would henceforth be Rebekah's, and that she might be refreshed after the long journey. . . . *wife,* probably shortly after. . . . *loved her* (Eph. v. 28). . . . *comforted . death.* A mother the best earthly comforter. Rebekah, as a kind wife, would do her best to supply so great a loss.

The Domestic Council—the Early Departure—the Happy Meeting.

- I. THE DOMESTIC COUNCIL. (1.) The family of Bethuel. Evening. Work of the day nearly over. The daughter gone to the well. Her long delay. Growing wonder. Rebekah's return. Shows the presents, and relates the story to her mother. Laban, hearing the tale and seeing the jewels, goes out to the well (29) and invites Eliezer to come into the house (31). (2.) *Eastern hospitality*. Provision for man and beast. (3.) *The council*. (a.) Eliezer states his mission (33—41). (b.) States how he wished for a sign, and had it fulfilled in Rebekah (43—47). (c.) Intimates that God is in this matter (42—48). (d.) Bethuel and Laban reply. They see the hand of God (50), and give their consent (51). (e.) Eliezer again acknowledges the good hand of the Lord (52), and produces more presents. (4.) This council conducted with frankness and piety on the one hand, and a due respect for the will of God on the other.
- II. THE EARLY DEPARTURE. (1.) Eliezer having performed his mission, is anxious to return. Thinks of his master, aged and anxious. Life uncertain. (2.) Laban and her mother plead for delay. Suggestive of the loveable character of Rebekah, and her value in the household. Perhaps never more prized than now that she must go. Reminds us of the tenacity with which we cling to dear objects in the moment of separation. (3.) Rebekah decides for a prompt departure. Having been a faithful daughter, she would now do her duty in her new relation. Her husband should not hear that she had been an unwilling bride. (4.) She bids adieu to home scenes, in company with her nurse; and dowried with the blessing of her family.
- III. THE HAPPY MEETING. (1.) The home of Abraham. The patriarch following his servant with his prayers. Reliant on God. (2.) Isaac waits the issue of this negotiation for his marriage. (3.) Goes out into the open country to meditate and pray (see marg. 63). Much in the past and present and future for him to pray and think about. (4.) Sees the camels, and goes to meet them. (5.) The well of "the living one that sees me." Happy would it be for the future life of many, if their early meetings were ruled by the thoughts suggested by the name of the well near which Isaac first met Rebekah. Much sin and sorrow might be avoided. (6.) Rebekah's modesty, the veil, and cordiality. Alights at once. (7.) Isaac's welcome. He conducts Rebekah to the tent that had been his mother's.

LEARN—

- I. The advantage of family union in matters of domestic importance.
- II. The duty of consulting parents in affairs of such consequence.
- III. To be diligent in business, like Eliezer.
- IV. To have times and places for meditation and prayer.
- V. To remember "the living that sees us" in all our intercourse with friends.

B.C. 1804. Gen. xxv. 27—34.

- 27 *the boys*. The two sons of Isaac (born B.C. 1836). . . . *Esau* (hairy), afterwards called Edom (red), v. 30. . . . *cunning*, skilful (xxvii. 3—5); (A.S. *cunnan* = to know; in a good sense, Ps. cxxxvii. 5; 1 Sam. xvi. 16). . . . *hunter*. In which the *reason* of the man was pitted successfully against the *instinct* of wild creatures. Animals hunted were savage beasts (Ex. xxiii. 29); lions (Jud. xiv. 5; 2 Sam. xxiii. 20); boars (Ps. lxxx. 13); bears (1 Sam. xvii. 34). The deer kind, game (1 Ki. iv. 23); for food (Prov. xii. 27). Used bows and arrows (xxvii. 3); pitfalls (Ez. xix. 4); nets (Is. li. 20); traps (Job xviii. 9; Prov. xxii. 5). . . . *field*, open country. Wild. Woodland. . . . *plain*, quiet, thoughtful (Job i. 1, 8; ii. 3; Ps. xxxvii. 37). . . . *dwelling*, &c., lover of home life (Heb. xi. 9). . . .
- 28 *Isaac . Esau*. The man admired the bold qualities. . . . *venison*: flesh of animals taken in hunting. By us applied only to flesh of deer kind (A.S. *deor* = wild animal. Durham = *deor-ham* = home of wild animals). . . .
- 29 *Rebekah . Jacob*. The woman admired home qualities. . . . *sod*, boiled (A.S. *seóthan* = to boil). . . . *pottage*, something prepared in a pot. Broth, &c. (Fr. *potage*). . . . *faint*, exhausted with hunting (*T. L. B.* 587). . . .
- 30 *Feed me*: Let me eat. A not unreasonable request of one brother to another. Jacob had doubtless sometimes eaten of Esau's venison. . . . *red*. The colour of lentile pottage (*ill.*—Arabica Revalenta). . . . *I am faint*, with hunting game for our father. . . . *Edom* = red. So called because he
- 31 too well loved the *red pottage*. . . . *Jacob said*. His opportunity had arrived. He would make a great gain out of the dire need of his fainting brother. . . . *birthright*. Let me be as the elder brother. Have the pre-eminence. The elder brother's share (Deut. xxi. 15—17). Head of the house. Family representative. "Jacob no doubt felt that his bro. had no valid claims to the privileges of the elder-born. It is probable that Jacob knew that Esau despised or disbelieved the religious covenants and promises connected with the line of family descent, and that he was utterly unfit to be trusted with matters of such high import. Jacob, too, had augmented, while Esau, by his wild and idle life, had squandered, rather than added to, the family estate" (*T. L. B.* 588). Yet all such apologies and explanations will not remove the conviction that Jacob acted wrongly. The end, however good, could not justify the means. A stronger faith would have left the future in the hands of God. *He* would have brought
- 32 it to pass. . . . *Esau said*. He was no match, this wild man, for his more crafty and far-seeing brother. . . . *point . die*. His fears and faintness
- 33 overcame his judgment. Jacob could not have seen him die. . . . *profit*, to a dying man. . . . *Swear*, confirm the bargain by a solemn asseveration. An appeal to the Deity (1 Sam. xiv. 29, 44; 2 Sam. xv. 21), accompanied by the lifting of the hand (xiv. 22; Deut. xxxii. 40; see Ps. xv. 4). . . .
- 34 *lentiles* (*Ervum lens*), a species of vetch (*Vicia*). Still used for food in Egypt and Asia Minor. Somewhat like our common vetch (*Vicia sativa*). (*D. B. N. S.* i. 402. See also *T. L. B.* 596; and *R. B. R.* i. 246). . . . *despised . birthright* (Phil. iii. 19; Heb. xii. 16, 17). Let the children of God take heed lest they slight the *right* they inherit on their new birth. Let them prize it above all things else, and though faint be ever pursuing it.

The Weary Hunter—the Crafty Designer—the Unfair Advantage.

- I. THE WEARY HUNTER. Esau. (1.) Had probably been from home long, had wandered far, had encountered much peril ; and had met with no success. (2.) Returns home weary and jaded and disappointed. Fainting with hunger. At the point to die. (3.) Had often brought home the fruits of the chase as food for the household, and especially for his father. Probably Jacob himself had often partaken of Esau's venison. (4.) Would even now, had he been successful, have shared his prize with his brother. (5.) He was wild, impetuous, open-handed, and open-hearted. Does not appear to have been a man of prayer. Gave place to revengeful feelings. Was his father's favourite, but does not appear to have envied the favourite of his mother.
- II. THE CRAFTY DESIGNER. Jacob. (1.) A plain man, simple and thoughtful in his habits. (2.) Had most likely weighed well the consequences to the family and the covenant, if Esau were to be the recognized representative of the house. (3.) Not unwise to consider such matters, but not right to seek to supplant Esau by wrong means. God knew, more than Jacob, about Esau ; and could if he thought proper, have displaced him by other means. (4.) Better to leave such judicial matters in the hands of God. "I will repay, saith the Lord." (5.) But Jacob may not have thought of these things. Had he been capable of such high and holy thoughts—at this time—about the covenant, he could hardly have missed the reflection, that God would take care for the proper working out of his covenant. With such a desire that the glory of God should be promoted, he could scarcely have descended to meanness. God would not be more likely to work out his will by Jacob, acting thus ; than by Esau with his wilder bent.
- III. THE UNFAIR ADVANTAGE. (1.) Jacob with his pottage before him. (2.) Esau returns as above. Sees the pottage and craves a portion. (3.) Jacob sees his opportunity. His offer. What would even Rebekah have thought of her favourite son (unless indeed she privately instigated this act) ? (4.) Esau's folly. Had he thought a moment, he must have felt certain that his brother could not let him die. No proportion between what he gave and what he got. Had he been a man of faith he would have been sure, that, as the elder-born, the promise would be worked out through him. He had better have borne the pangs of hunger for a season than sacrifice the future. Many forget the future in their care for the present. Esau's folly has been often repeated since.

LEARN—

- I. Divine wisdom is better than human craft.
- II. Generosity is more noble than selfishness.
- III. A good object will not justify unworthy means.
- IV. What was our birthright, compared with what Jesus has secured for us ?

B.C. 1760. Gen. xxvii. 18—46.

- 18 Note:—It may be well to read the preceding verses, though there be not time to explain the whole. . . . *he*, Jacob. . . . *came*, disguised (v. 11, 15, 16). . . . *father*, who was blind (v. 1). . . . *My father*. *I*. His voice he could not effectually conceal. . . . *who*. Isaac recognizes the voice of
- 19 Jacob. . . . *Esau*. A lie for which no defence can be offered; not even v. 13. . . . *venison*, which the old man loved (xxv. 28). . . . *bless* (v. 4).
- 20 *quickly*: since it would take time for the most cunning hunter to obtain the wild animal. . . . *Lord thy God*. Which, if true, would suggest to Isaac that God favoured his design. One lie often needs another to sup-
- 21, 22 port it. . . . *Isaac*, still suspicious. . . . *feel* (v. 12). . . . *went near*. What were his thoughts? . . . *voice*. This Jacob could not effectually
- 23 alter. . . . *discerned*, detected. . . . *hairy* (v. 16). . . . *Esau's*. In his case a natural peculiarity, strengthened by his hardy and wild life. . . . *blessed*
- 24 *him*, awarded to him the covenant blessing. . . . *he said*, being still suspicious. Did the old man think Jacob capable of deception? Evidently he did. He knew him. He may also have known of the sale of the birth-
- 25 right. . . . *eat . drink*. Not a very edifying sight, this old man so
- 26 attached to the good things of life. . . . *Come near*, the suspicion not yet removed. Perhaps the dish, though disguised by the skilful cookery of
- 27 Rebekah, excited it afresh (*D. B. N. S. i. 412; K. D. B. I. i. 294; Kittó's Bible, in loc.*). . . . *raiment*, which belonged to Esau (v. 15). . . .
- 28 *smell . field*, odour of flowers, &c. (*D. B. N. S. i. 417*). . . . *Therefore*. The blessing was much in keeping with Esau's character (Heb. xi. 20). *fatness*, fruitfulness (Deut. xxxiii. 13, 28; 2 Sam. i. 21; xli. 18). . . .
- 29 *plenty*, &c., grain and fruit. . . . *Let . serve* (ix. 25; xxv. 23). . . .
- 30 *mother's sons* (xlix. 8). . . . *cursed* (xii. 3; Num. xxiv. 9). . . . *Esau*,
- 31 ignorant of what had passed. . . . *savoury*, flavoured, seasoned. . . .
- 32 *Isaac*, astonished, all his suspicions of foul play reviving. . . . *firstborn*,
- 33 but he had sold his right. . . . *trembled*, with fear and sorrow. . . . *taken* = hunted. . . . *yea*, though obtained by subtlety, the blessing should not be
- 34 revoked (xxviii. 3, 4; Ro. xi. 29). . . . *cried*, wept (Heb. xii. 17). . . . *Bless*. It was more an earthly father's blessing that he sought than the
- 35, 36 covenant blessing. . . . *subtlety*, deceit, craft. . . . *rightly named*: Jacob = supplanter. . . . *birthright* (xxv. 33). . . . *reserved*. The bless-
- 37 ings of our heavenly Father not exhausted. . . . *Behold*: lit. fulfilled. I have given him what was most worth the having. . . . *what*, remains that
- 38 will suffice for what is lost. . . . *one blessing*, however small. How very
- 39 earnest and sincere was Esau's sorrow. . . . *Isaac* will rather give a little than nothing. Giving much does not impoverish God; nor withholding,
- 40 enrich. . . . *sword*: promise of success in war (2 Sam. viii. 14; Obad. 18,
- 41 19, 20; 2 Ki. viii. 20). . . . *hated* (xxxvii. 4, 8). . . . *heart*, privately at first, afterwards an open threat (v. 42). . . . *days* (l. 3, 4, 10), anxiously
- 42 anticipated the death of his father as the time of vengeance. . . . *comfort*,
- 43 nursing vengeance (Ps. lxiv. 5). . . . *obey*. He had often obeyed that
- 44 voice. Anxiety of Rebekah. . . . *Laban* (xxiv. 29). . . . *few days*. She knew the generous spirit of Esau would not long nurse such murderous
- 45 intentions. . . . *forget*. Jacob out of sight would be out of mind, she
- 46 thought. . . . *Rebekah . Isaac*. This was her excuse to her husband, who seems not to know the part she had played in the transaction. Jacob does not appear to have exposed his mother to his father. . . . *dau. . Heth*. Women of Canaan. Hittites.

The Blind Father—the Wily Supplanter—the Disappointed Son.

- I. THE BLIND FATHER. Isaac. (1.) *Now very aged.* 136 years old. Feeble. Ought to have been specially revered, both as a father and because so aged. Reverence due to old age. What more beautiful than old age? (Prov. xv. 31). See the word of God concerning old age (Lev. xix. 32; 2 Ch. xxxvi. 17; Prov. xx. 29). (2.) *Helpless.* Forced to sit in the house while his sons were actively employed. Dependent on the kind offices of others. (3.) *Blind.* And therefore should have been specially revered, and treated with most respectful tenderness. (4.) *Felt his end approaching* (v. 4). Should therefore have been treated with the greater consideration. (5.) *About to impart the covenant blessing.* A most solemn act. To be given, and received, in the fear of God. (6.) *Would signalize it with a feast.* The last he might have; and his own beloved Esau should prepare it.
- II. THE WILY SUPPLANTER. Jacob, whose nature was at this time true to his name. (1.) *Receives a hint from his mother.* Sad that her maternal love should have prompted such an act. Esau, as much her son as Jacob. She was equally bound by natural obligations to care for one as the other. No apologies seem to be a sufficient vindication of conduct that was in its very essence wrong. (2.) *Closes with his mother's recommendation.* He ought to have resented it; to have expostulated, and overruled it. He rather suggests difficulties (v. 11), to prompt her ingenuity. (3.) *Adopts the disguise she prepared, and followed her directions.* Deception; and self-deception the worst of all. Perhaps thought it well, even by such means, to gain the blessing. (4.) *Repeated falsehoods.* Again and again assured his father that he was Esau. (5.) *Obtained the blessing.* Yet how could that bless which had been so obtained? God, in his mercy, ultimately brought good out of the evil. Otherwise the father's blessing, so obtained, must have been a curse.
- III. THE DISAPPOINTED SON. Esau. Having lost his birthright, only this blessing remained; now he loses it. (1.) Having departed to hunt in obedience to his father (vv. 3, 4), he now returns, laden with the spoils of the chase (vv. 30, 31). (2.) Astonishment of father and son (vv. 33, 34). (3.) Their comment on the character of Jacob (vv. 35, 36). (4.) Esau's deep and bitter sorrow (v. 38). (5.) His revengeful feeling towards Jacob. (6.) The sundering of home ties occasioned by this double dealing. Jacob must fly to escape Esau, and Esau in his mortification left his home. (7.) Rebekah is punished for her folly, in that she must now part with her beloved Jacob.

LEARN—

- I. To respect and reverence old age, and commiserate its infirmities.
- II. To cultivate a spirit of truth, honesty, and honour in our dealings.
- III. To shun every occasion of household strife.
- IV. To seek the blessing of our heavenly Father, in the full confidence that all he has given to others has not so impoverished him that there is not a blessing left for us.

B.C. 1760. Gen. xxviii. 10—22.

- 10 *Jacob*, having thus subtly obtained the birthright, and now fearing his brother's anger, and apparently desirous of pleasing his father and mother (vv. 1—5). . . . *Beer-sheba* (well of the oath), in S. of Palestine (xxvi. 25). *Haran*. In Mesopotamia, 23 m. S. of Ur of Chaldees (xi. 27—32; xii. 5).
- 11 *lighted*, old word (Ru. ii. 3; 2 Sam. xvii. 12), *lit.* to come down, settle; *all*, a bird settling after a flight (A.S. *lihtan*). . . . *tarried* (W. *tarian*; Lat. *tardare*), stayed. . . . *stones . pillows*. Pillows of stone or wood were commonly used (*Kitto's Pict. Sunday Bk.* pl. 73; *Art. "Bed," K. E. B. L.*), (1 Sam. xix. 13; Mar. iv. 38). . . . *dreamed* (xli. 1; Job xxxiii. 15). The disclosures made to the spirits of men of old, during the sleep of the body, may be a hint of what shall ensue when the sleep of death overtakes our physical nature. . . . *ladder*, a way of ascent and descent between heaven and earth. A type of Christ (Jo. i. 51; Heb. i. 14). . . . *set . earth*: *Ill.* Christ's human nature (Jo. xvi. 26; xvii. 4). . . . *heaven* (Heb. viii. 1; ix. 24; Col. i. 20; Jo. xiv. 6). . . . *angels, &c.* (1 Pet. i. 12). . . .
- 13 *Lord stood*, owning and explaining. . . . *God . Abraham* (xvii. 7; Heb. i. 14). . . . *the land, &c.*, a confirmation of the old promise (xiii. 15; xxxv. 12). . . . *seed*, descendants (xiii. 16). . . . *dust*, as hard to be numbered. *spread abroad*, Heb. break forth. . . . *blessed*, salvation is of the Jews. Jesus
- 15 the fulfilment of this promise. . . . *with thee* (Ex. xxxiii. 14, 15). . . . *keep thee* (Ps. lxxi. 3; lxxiii. 23—25; cxxi. 5, 7, 8). . . . *all places*. But at this time Jacob was in the way to please God. He was obeying his parents. . . . *bring . again* (xxxv. 6). He went out with fear of Esau, and returned with trembling, but God took care of him. . . . *not leave, &c.* (Deut. xxxi. 6—8; Josh. i. 5; 1 Ki. viii. 57; Heb. xiii. 5; Num. xxiii. 19). . . . *Lord . place*. He is in every place. . . . *knew . not*, thought not of it. The simplest truths and facts need to be brought home to us
- 17 (Ex. iii. 5; Josh. v. 15). . . . *afraid*. The nearness of God should make us afraid of sin, and fly to Christ for refuge. . . . *house . God*, the place where God dwells and manifests himself. *Ill.* the sanctuary. . . . *gate . heaven*. The house of God has been, to many, the gate of H. . . . *early*, to pay his vows promptly to the Lord. . . . *pillar* (xxxi. 13, 45; xxxv. 14). . . . *oil* (Lev. viii. 10—12; Num. vii. 1). Oil was eaten with bread.
- 19 This was part of the supply Jacob took with him. . . . *Bethel* = house of
- 20 God (Jud. i. 23, 26; Hos. iv. 15). . . . *If*. There should be no ifs in our vows to God. Whatever God in providence may be to us, our duty to him is clear. A little of the old bargaining spirit is too apparent here. Men should not turn their vows and prayers into commercial treaties. . . . *bread . raiment*. Still it was little that Jacob asked (Prov. xxx. 8; 1 Tim. vi. 8). . . . *I come* (Jud. xi. 31; 2 Sam. xix. 24, 30). . . . *father's house*. The wanderer's thoughts turned homewards. Do our hearts turn to our Father's house above? . . . *peace*. He still seems to be thinking of Esau's threat. . . . *then*, and what if he does not so return? might not God have a claim upon him? We should serve God without regard to the future; it
- 22 is a present duty (Deut. xxvi. 17; 2 Sam. xv. 8; 2 Ki. v. 17). . . . *tenth*. This was a voluntary resolution. As yet there was no law concerning the dedication of a tenth to purposes of religion. Possibly the consecration of such a proportion was an ancient practice (xiv. 20).
- S. J. C. i. 58. S. S. P. 219. *Kiel and Delitzsch on the Pentateuch, in loc.* R. B. R. ii. 125—130, 314. *Lightfoot's Works*, ii. 20 (fol. ed.). *Burder's Orient. Cust.* 354. *Jamieson's East. Man., Old Test.* 93

The Benighted Traveller—the Wonderful Vision—the Pious Resolution.

- I. THE BENIGHTED TRAVELLER. Jacob. (1.) Now for the first time leaving home. His purpose twofold: (*a.*) to escape the fury of Esau, and (*b.*) to visit his father's friends at Padan-Aram. Journey of many miles. Must be made a-foot. Jacob seems not to have taken even a single camel with him. (2.) The thoughts with which Jacob would pursue his journey. His old life and character. His future prospects. He was certainly, at this time, trying to obey that father whom he had deceived so cruelly. He had won the birthright and the blessing: but surely he would reflect on the means with regret. *Ver.* 7 shows that Jacob was now bent on making some compensation for the sorrow he had occasioned. (3.) Arrives at Luz. Night suddenly overtook him on the hills. No house or shelter. Takes a stone for a pillow, and lies down to sleep.
- II. THE WONDERFUL VISION. Dif. between a dream and a vision. Dreams arising out of mental and physical states (the objective reflection of the subjective state)? Visions often (not always, *Ac.* x. 10—13) independent of such condition, and intended to impart moral or religious instruction. (1.) *What he saw.* (*a.*) A ladder. That is, a shining pathway of steps leading up to heaven. (*b.*) Angels ascending and descending. (*c.*) *The Lord*—the angel of the covenant—at the top of the ladder, explaining the meaning to him. (2.) *What it meant.* (*a.*) A picture of providence. God's care for him. Angels had charge concerning him. A way was open between wherever he might be and the God of Abraham. (*b.*) A picture of grace too. A type of Christ. Angels ascending and descending upon the Son of man. He is the true way that is open between us and God. Divine blessings, through him, come down to us; and our prayers, through him, go up to the Father. He is the living way.
- III. THE PIOUS RESOLUTION. (1.) The Lord shall be my God. This was his resolve. His God, as opposed to the false gods of the heathen world. His God, as his daily provider, guide, object of worship and trust, &c. His God, to be loved, honoured, and trusted. (2.) But he formed it conditionally. "If," &c., *v.* 20. It was as far as his light and knowledge went. It was the natural outcome of his trafficking spirit. We have been taught better. Should serve God unconditionally. Because it is right. (3.) He signalized it by setting up a memorial stone, which he consecrated (*v.* 18). (4.) He changed the name from Luz (= almond tree) to Bethel (= house of God). (5.) He purposed to dedicate a portion of his substance to God.

LEARN—

- I. To remember that God is always near to us. A good thought for young people away from home and on their travels.
- II. To remember that a way is opened between our souls and God—our Father in heaven. "No man cometh to the Father but by me."
- III. To remember that the gate of heaven is nearer than we think.
- IV. If we serve him, he will give his angels charge concerning us.

B.C. 1753. Gen. xxix. 1—14.

- 1 *Then Jacob*, having been favoured with the wonderful vision, and formed his resolution for the future (less. 25). . . . *went . journey*, Heb. lifted up his feet, phrase denoting resolution and speed. . . . *came* (Num. xxiii. 7; Hos. xii. 12). . . . *people*, Heb. children. . . . *east*. They dwelt far east-
- 2 ward of Palestine. . . . *he looked*, phrase denoting attentive observation. *a well*, sunk there for the purpose; and which would be a place of meeting. *field*, i. e. the open country, not a hedged or walled enclosure. . . . *three flocks*. In our country three flocks would be soon united into one. There, the domestic and trained habits of sheep kept them separate (Jo. x. 1—18; *Class and Desk*, N. T. 106). . . . *lying* (Ps. xxiii.), waiting to be watered. (*for* : to the end of next verse is a parenthetical account of a custom). . . . *great stone*, not only to preserve the well from impurity, and so heavy that the sheep could not displace it, and so fall in, but also to keep the water
- 3 cool, and save it from evaporation. . . . *they*, the shepherds. . . . *stone again*,
- 4 a shepherd's carefulness. . . . *brethren*, courteous address. . . . *Of Haran*. A place familiar by name to Jacob. It was where Abraham received the
- 5 final call. . . . *Laban*. His uncle, and brother to his mother Rebekah. son, descendant of. Laban was strictly the son of Bethuel. . . . *Nahor*?
- 6 bro. of Abraham. . . . *Is he well?* *lit.* is there peace with him (1 Sam. xxv. 6; 1 Chron. xii. 18; Lu. x. 5). In after years the same inquiry was made concerning Jacob (xlili. 27). . . . *Rachel*. The younger of Laban's two daughters (xxxiii. 1—7; xxxv. 16—25; xli. 19—22, 25; xlviii. 7; Ruth iv. 11; 1 Sam. x. 2; Jer. xxxi. 15; Matt. ii. 18). . . . *sheep*. She
- 7 was a shepherdess (v. 9). . . . *high day*, *lit.* the day is great. Advanced to the heat of it. . . . *time*, evening (less. 21). . . . *water . sheep*, pour water in troughs for them. . . . *go*. He desired to speak privately to
- 8 Rachel. . . . *until all*. Otherwise the task would have to be repeated. *till . roll*, till the proper time for doing this. . . . *then*, according to our
- 9 custom. . . . *Rachel* (Ex. ii. 16), who during this conversation had been
- 10 approaching. . . . *came*, to the well. . . . *came . pass*, followed. . . . *went near*. His heart opening to affection, and the influence of the claims of
- 11 kindred. . . . *rolled* (Ex. ii. 17). . . . *kissed*, the Oriental form of salutation, as shaking hands with us (xxvii. 26, 27; xxxiii. 4; 2 Sam. xiv. 33; Ru. i. 14; Ps. ii. 12; Lu. vii. 45; Rom. xvi. 16; 1 Cor. xvi. 20; 2 Cor. xiii. 12; 1 Thess. v. 26; 1 Pet. v. 14). . . . *voce*, in thanksgiving and prayer. . . . *wept*, for very joy and gratitude, that the object of his long
- 12 journey was brought to so happy an issue. . . . *told Rachel*. How great must have been her surprise. . . . *ran* (xxiv. 28), as her aunt Rebekah had
- 13 aforetime (xxiv. 28). . . . *tidings*, *lit.* the hearing = the news. . . . *ran*, in the fulness of his joy to welcome and entertain his far-travelled relative, the son of the sister he loved. . . . *kissed*, as Rachel had before. . . . *brought . house*, as in the case of Eliezer Eastern hospitality. . . . *he*, Jacob. . . . *these things*. The story of his life and kinship to Laban, and
- 14 wherefore he had made this long journey. . . . *bone . flesh*, a phrase denoting the closest relationship (ii. 28; Jud. ix. 2; 2 Sam. v. 1; xix. 12, 13). . . . *space . month*, *lit.* month of days.

The Stranger at the Well—the Shepherdess—the Welcome Home.

- I. THE STRANGER AT THE WELL. Jacob. (1.) The journey ended. Canaan, Bethel, and his father's house behind him. Mountains, deserts, rivers, and rocky wildernesses between. God had kept him (xxviii. 20), so far, from wild beasts and robbers, and all "perils of the wilderness." (2.) He arrives on the confines of civilized life once more; yet knows not how near the end of his journey he is. Finds flocks, and pasturage, and the dwellings of men. (3.) Rests by the well side. Knows that it will soon be the meeting-place of men, from the flocks that are gathering round the spot. (4.) The shepherds arrive. He converses with them. Finds they are of Haran, —the place he is journeying to. Inquires concerning his kindred. Discovers that they are well, and that Rachel, the daughter of Laban, is on the way to water the flock.
- II. THE SHEPHERDESS. Rachel. (1.) Primitive habits, and pastoral life in the East. The daughters of large land owners, and men of substance, tending sheep. (2.) Rachel approaches the well. Finds a stranger sitting near. Knows him not. *He* has been told who she is. (3.) Though weary with his journey, Jacob rises, and rolls the stone away, and waters Rachel's flock for her. Rachel doubtless wondering at this unexpected kindness. (4.) Jacob, having watered the flock, salutes the shepherdess after the common fashion of the country. A courteous and customary greeting. (5.) Jacob weeps tears of *joy*, that he has found the kindred of whom he is in search; and of *thankfulness*, that God has so far guided and blessed him. Rachel wondering. (6.) Jacob tells his story. Mentions the name of that Rebekah of whom she had heard, and who years before had gone across the great desert to her distant home.
- III. THE WELCOME HOME. The home of Laban. (1.) Rachel, full of joyful surprise, hastens forward, and tells the story of the strange traveller to her father. (2.) Laban, also surprised, quickly goes to the well to meet him. Salutes him, as Jacob had saluted Rachel, and brings him home. Eastern hospitality. (3.) Jacob repeats his story to Laban. Doubtless, while silent about many things, related that the birthright and the blessing were his; and described the vision he had by the way. (4.) Laban cordially—because of his relationship especially—invites Jacob to abide with him.

LEARN—

- I. That a good man's steps are ordered of the Lord, and he delighteth in his way.
- II. If we commit our way unto the Lord, he will bring it to pass.
- III. As Jacob watered Rachel's flock, so should we be self-denying and helpful.
- IV. Aim, like Rachel, at living a useful life. It was when she was employed in her works of duty that she met with Jacob.
- V. Like Jacob, acknowledge God as the giver of all good, and the guide of our life.

B.C. 1739. Gen. xxxi. 17—34.

- 17 *Then*, having been commanded to return (*v.* 13), and Rachel and Leah having assented (*v.* 14). . . . *rose up*, prepared for the departure. . . . *sons*, Reuben (xxix. 32), Simeon (*v.* 33), Levi (*v.* 34), Judah (*v.* 35), Dan (xxx. 6), Naphtali (*v.* 8), Gad (*v.* 11), Asher (*v.* 13), Issachar (*v.* 18), Zebulun (*v.* 20), [Dinah, a daugh. (*v.* 21)], Joseph (*v.* 24). . . . *wives*, Rachel and Leah.
- 18 *camels* (less. 21). . . . *cattle*, sheep and goats. . . . *goods*, movable property, tents, &c. . . . *gotten*, gained by God's blessing. . . . *Padan-aram*, = plain of Syria; Aram, of the fields. Prob. a fertile dis. lying round Haran. . . . *to Isaac*, whom he had wronged, and to whom his heart turned. . . . *Canaan*, where his birthright was. . . . *shear . sheep*. One of the most important of the farm operations in the East (1 Sam. xxv. 11), accompanied with great festivity (2 Sam. xiii. 23). The wool needed for clothing, &c. Hence it was about the beginning of May that Jacob departed, sheep-shearing with them being ab. a mo. earlier than with us. . . . *stolen*. Was she idolatrous at heart? or was this done to remind her father of how little use his gods had been to him, and to turn his mind to that God who had prospered Jacob? . . . *images*, teraphim (answering to Roman *penates*, or household gods). . . . *unawares*, unexpectedly (Num. xxxv. 11; Josh. xx. 9; Ps. xxxv. 8), see *marg.* . . . *in that*. He concealed his intention, and
- 20 left while Laban was full of business. Flight, well-timed. . . . *river*, Euphrates. . . . *mount Gilead*, between the Euphrates and the Jordan. . . .
- 22 *third day*, Laban being at a distance from home, Jacob had time to get for-
- 23 ward with his goods. . . . *brethren*, kinsmen and servants. . . . *seven days*, travelling twice as fast as Jacob with his camp equipage. . . . *mount Gilead*,
- 24 ab. 15 m. fr. Jordan. . . . *God*, who knew the intentions of Laban, that they were violent. . . . *good . bad*, lit. from good to bad. God knew that from
- 25 smooth words he would proceed to violence. Characteristic of Laban. . . .
- 26 *pitched . tent*, set up his camp. . . . *in*, the rocky defiles of mt Gilead. . . .
- 27 *stolen . unawares*. There was no other way open for Jacob, as Laban well knew. . . . *steal*, see *marg.* Overcome my vigilance. Beguiled my heart.
- tabret*. Musical instruments were of three kinds, stringed (harp, sackbut, psaltery), wind (cornet, dulcimer, flute, organ, pipe, trumpet), percussion (bells, cymbals, tabrets). The t. still used in the East; and played like the modern tambourine. . . . *harp* (Gen. iv. 21): bones formed the side and top,
- 28 and a tortoiseshell was used for the foot. . . . *suffered*, &c. A pretence of
- 29 affection, when violence was intended . . . *hurt*, which, but for the dream, he would have proceeded to. When he set out, he doubtless intended to bring them back by force. . . . *God*. Now Jacob learns that God has inter-
- 30, 31 posed on his behalf. . . . *sore*, severely (A.S. *sār swær*). . . . *afraid*, as he
- 32 had reason to be, from the known character of Laban. . . . *not live* (xliv. 9). This concealment between husband and wife might have issued seriously but for the ready wit of Rachel. It is plain that she knew that Jacob
- 33 would not suffer these idols to be any part of his goods (xxxv. 4). . . . *Jacob's tent*. Beginning with whom he most suspected. He little thought that Rachel had concealed them, and yet might have been sure that Jacob, who hated idolatry, would not have taken them. But the evil-hearted ever suspect others.
- D. B. N. S. i. 442. S. J. C. i. 60. *Lightfoot's Works*, i. 48—51; ii. 374. T. L. B. 369, 370. *Engrav. of Teraphim*, *ibid.* 215. S. S. P. 322-3. R. B. R. i. 349; iii. 343. *Jamieson's Eastern Cust., Old Test.*, 116 ff. K. D. B. I. i. 315. T. L. B. 369.

The Flight—the Pursuit—the Parting.

- I. THE FLIGHT of Jacob from Laban. (1.) *Cause.* (a.) Jealousy of Jacob's prosperity amongst Laban's family (v. 1). (b.) Jacob had himself been not very kindly treated by Laban (v. 7). (c.) Command of God that he should return (v. 13). Added to this, Rachel and Leah, also, were willing to depart, as feeling that they were not so welcome at home as formerly (vv. 14, 15); (d.) and yet could not go away openly. Laban would have hindered him, or have prevented his carrying away the whole of his property (v. 42). (2.) *Time.* Sheepshearing. So important a duty that Laban must himself superintend it. He goes some distance from home. While Laban is absent, Jacob steals away. Collects his flocks and herds, servants and substance, and sets out over the desert which he had traversed some 21 years before with only his staff in his hand.
- II. THE PURSUIT. Of Laban after Jacob. Laban did not hear of Jacob's flight till three days had passed. This part of the journey Jacob would naturally travel with all speed. So large a caravan could not march without leaving the plain track behind. Laban in pursuit for seven days; i. e. until ten days after Jacob had started. Reaching the mountains of Gilead and their defiles, and not overtaken; Jacob might think the pursuit had not been undertaken, or if so, then abandoned. Evening of tenth day Laban and his band approach. Too exhausted by the march to bring matters to an issue at once. The two camps retire to rest. Night settles down on the hills of Gilead, and watchfires, &c. Probably it was this night that Laban had a wonderful vision, in which he was warned respecting his treatment of Jacob. From the nature of the vision it is plain how murderous his intentions were.
- III. THE PARTING. Of Jacob and Laban. (1.) The controversy between Laban and Jacob. Laban's charge against Jacob. Going by stealth. Leading his daughters as captives (com. vv. 14, 15 with 26). Pretence of great affection (vv. 27, 28). Assertion of power. Acknowledgment of Divine interference. Charge of stealing the idols. (2.) Jacob's reply. Tells the truth (v. 31), but not all the truth (com. vv. 1—16). Repudiates, sternly and promptly, the charge of carrying off the images. (3.) The search for the idols, which are not found. (4.) They set up a memorial pillar, and so part at Mispah. The two camps remaining there another night, and travelling, east and west, early in the morning, to meet no more.

LEARN—

- I. Be thankful for the domestic relations of life, and that ours do not demand our flight from home and kindred.
- II. Jacob bore cruel usage for 20 years, and even then did not prepare for flight till God had given him the command.
- III. The vision sent to Laban shows that God would have family meetings peaceably conducted, and those who have had unkind thoughts, He would have lay them aside.
- IV. Christ Jesus, the Prince of Peace, is the great reconciler.

B.C. 1739. Gen. xxxii. 1—23.

- 1 *And Jacob.* Having effected a reconciliation with Laban at mt Gilead (xxxi. 43—55). . . . *his way*, towards Canaan. . . . *angels* (Ps. xci. 11; Heb. i. 14). . . . *met him*, not in dream, but openly in the daytime. What
- 2 transpired is not stated. . . . *God's host* (Josh. v. 14; Ps. ciii. 21; cxlviii. 2; Lu. ii. 13). . . . *Mahanaim*, i. e. the two hosts, or camps, so called because the Lord's host joined his host (1 Ki. iv. 14). *M.* afterwards a
- 3 distinguished city, N. of R. Jabbok. . . . *messengers.* Jacob might easily have entered Canaan without encountering his brother. But he preferred to be reconciled. . . . *Seir*, which was quite in the S. border of Canaan (xxxiii. 14, 16). The going and coming of these messengers would oc-
- 4 cupy some days. . . . *commanded* them to carry a message of peace, and an offer of presents. . . . *my lord Esau. servant Jacob.* Terms of respect and humility. . . . *sojourned*, remained for a time (lit. to stay the day, from
- 5 Fr. *séjourner*). . . . *grace*, favour, acceptance. Jacob was uncertain as to
- 6 his brother's state of mind. . . . *four hundred men.* Esau had become a powerful chief, with many retainers, who were needful to subdue the
- 7 Horites (*Delitzsch*). . . . *afraid*, thinking Esau would carry out his old plan of revenge (xxvii. 41). . . . *distressed*, about the issue of the meeting.
- 8 *two bands*, either of which, from its size and containing one of his wives,
- 9 might be taken for the whole of his property. . . . *escape.* He expected to
- 10 lose half . . . *said*, in earnest humble prayer. . . . *God. father.* He reminds God of his covenant relation. . . . *which saidst*, and of his promise
- 11 (xxxi. 3—13). . . . *not worthy*, as indeed no one is. . . . *least. mercies.* How then can any hope to merit heaven? . . . *truth*, faithfulness to thy
- 12 promise. . . . *staff*, only that at first. . . . *Deliver* (Ps. lix. 1, 2). . . . *mother, &c.* A proverbial expression for unsparing cruelty, ill. from the bird, which covers its young to protect them (Deut. xxii. 6; com. Hos. x. 14).
- 13 *thou saidst*, again he recalls the promise (xxviii. 13—15). . . . *came. hand*, as nearest to him, that which he required. . . . *present*, of reconcilia-
- 14 tion (xliii. 11; Prov. xvii. 16). . . . *two hundred. &c.* From this great pre-
- 15 sent may be inferred the greatness of Jacob's wealth. . . . *pass over*, i. e. the R. Jabbok. . . . *space, &c.*, that the whole may seem the greater, and each part be better seen and valued; and that Esau's wrath might be
- 16 gradually appeased. . . . *foremost*, the servant going with the first drove.
- 17 *he*, "thy servant Jacob". . . . *and so*, in like manner, a succession of
- 18 gifts and messages showed a determination to be reconciled. . . . *for*, this was his reason. . . . *he, Jacob.* . . . *said*, resolved within himself. . . .
- 19 *appease* (Prov. xxi. 14). . . . *accept*, receive. . . . *of me*, lit. my face (Job
- 20 xvi i. 8, 9). . . . *went. present*: to tell its own tale of his desire for
- 21 brotherly friendship. . . . *company*, among his people. . . . *that night*, when it was fairly set in. . . . *wives, &c.* (less. 27). . . . *ford*, ten yards wide. . . .
- 22 *Jabbok*, now Waddy Zurka. This river flows into the Jordan about half way between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea (Deut. iii. 16). . . .
- 23 *sent. over.* He himself remaining behind (see next less.). Doubtless resolving to turn to the great Helper in every time of need.

S. J. C. i. 63. D. B. N. S. i. 448. Porter's *Damascus*, ii. 255. S. S. P. 299. R. B. R. ii. 121; iii. 362. Lightfoot's *Works*, i. 1019. Jamieson's *East. Cust.*, O. T. 121. K. D. B. I. i. 321. Burder's *Orient. Cust.*, 301-2 (Longman). T. L. B. 331.

Jacob's Plan—Jacob's Prayer—Jacob's Conduct.

- I. JACOB'S PLAN. (1.) *How it originated.* (a.) In the report he heard of Esau's approach at the head of 400 men (v. 6). (b.) His fear lest Esau might intend to carry out his old purpose of revenge (v. 7; xxvii. 42). (c.) His perplexity. Not having strength to resist such a force (v. 7). (d.) His desire to save, if possible, the half of his property (v. 8). (2.) *In what it consisted.* In the division of his flocks and herds, &c., into two companies. It must have been a huge company at the first, for him to think, after the message he sent (vv. 4, 5), that his brother would imagine the half was all he had. He thought that one half, hearing the attack upon the other, might in the confusion escape while Esau was driving off his plunder. (3.) The plan was *well contrived*. A little of the old Jacob is here planning and scheming. (4.) How he wronged his brother by his unjust suspicions. (5.) How he wronged God, by not in the first place seeking his guidance and help. His old method of taking the plan into his own hands. Still relying too much on human sagacity.
- II. JACOB'S PRAYER. (1.) Having made his plans, according to his own wisdom, then he asked God to bless him; and in the end found that his plans were all needless. Prayer at the *first* would have saved him much perplexity and fear. (2.) When he did pray he displayed great humility of soul and dependence upon God. (a.) He approached God in his covenant relation as the God of Abraham. (b.) He reminds his Divine friend of his own obedience in obeying his call to return. (c.) He mentions the promise, "I will deal well with thee." (d.) He protests his own great unworthiness. (e.) He gratefully acknowledges the good hand of God in so increasing his substance. (f.) He supplicates present help in his time of need. (g.) He reminds God of the covenant promise. Having presented this his prayer, he proceeds to select a present for his brother.
- III. JACOB'S CONDUCT. All being ready, his company divided, the present prepared, Jacob sent the present forward in divisions, each drove with servants, and each servant with a message;—one part of the message being that Jacob was himself about to follow the gift. The spirit of the gift conciliatory. Conciliation his avowed purpose (v. 20). The present was designed to break down every feeling of revenge and anger supposed still to exist in the mind of Esau. Jacob himself would remain that night, which at one time he feared would be his last, with his company. Growing more confident as the night advanced, he arose and sent over his wives and children. Thus committed to the care of God all that he had.—

LEARN—

- I. That the fruit of past sins is sure to spring up in our way. Jacob cannot forget the evil he had done; nor return, after this long absence from home, without confronting its results.
- II. That prayer is the best means of meeting great difficulties. Our best plans ineffective without that blessing which prayer secures. Prayer puts the heart into the best condition for enduring trial.

B.C. 1739. Gen. xxxii. 24—32.

- 24 *Jacob*, having thus (less. 28) sent forwards his wives, &c. . . . *alone* : and yet not alone, for God was with him. With this exception, alone with his thoughts, what a review of his past life would he take; and what a meditation on the present and future would he pursue. . . . *wrestled* (A.S. *vræstan*, to twist). Heb. word sig. to plant limb and limb firmly together, in contracting oneself (Phil. i. 27; Rom. xv. 30; Heb. x. 32). . . . *a man*, an angel in human form. The Angel of the covenant (Hos. xii. 3, 4; Eph. vi. 12). . . . *breaking*, Heb. ascendancy of day, i. e. rising of the sun. . . . *day*, which was decided as to his fate with man, by his victory in prayer.
- 25 *prevailed*, overcame, conquered. Faith prevailed even over Christ (Matt. xv. 22; xxiv. 27, 28). . . . *touched*, with supernatural energy. . . . *hollow*, "the cup-shaped cavity (*acetabulum*) into which the round head of the thigh-bone (*femur*) fits" (*D. B. N. S.* i. 449). . . . *and . hollow* (Matt. xxvi. 41; 2 Cor. xii. 7). . . . *out . joint*, dislocated. . . . *he*, the mysterious angel. . . . *said*, becoming a suppliant (*L. xiv.* 28). . . . *and he, Jacob. said*, resolving to conquer, though weakened. . . . *I will not* (Hos. xii. 4)
- 27 *except*. Some blessing he *would* have. . . . *what . name*. He knew, but would fix the attention of Jacob on the purport of the change. . . . *Jacob*, i. e. "supplanter." As a supplanter he had succeeded with Esau, using means
- 28 humanly devised. . . . *Thy name* (xxxv. 10; 2 Ki. xvii. 34). . . . *Israel* : "God's fighter." As one who fought for God, he was to win the battle of life by better means, than as a mere human supplanter he would have devised (see *margin*). . . . *prince*. "Thou hast behaved thyself princely, hast had princely power, or, got the principedom and dominion." Hereupon the Church, when speech is of her infirmity, is often called *Jacob*, and when her glory and valour are signified she is called *Israel* (see Amos vii. 2, 5, 8; Isa. xli. 14; Gal. vi. 16). . . . *with men* (xxv. 31; xxvii. 33). . . . *Tell . name*. This was refused, lest as some (*Jamieson*, &c.) think, Jacob might be too much elated at finding whom he had prevailed over. . . . *wherefore*, let it be enough that thou hast conquered (Jud. xiii. 18). . . . *blessed* : pronounced him blessed. Confirmed previous blessings. . . . *there*, on the spot where the victory was gained. The place of persevering, earnest,
- 30 successful prayer is always the place of blessing. . . . *Peniel*, i. e. the face of God (xvi. 13; Ex. xxiv. 11; xxxiii. 20; Deut. v. 24; Jud. vi. 22; xiii. 22; Isa. vi. 5). . . . *life . preserved*. Knowing, believing fully, that
- 31 it would, he said it *is* preserved (Heb. xi. 1). . . . *Penuel*, S. of Jabbok. Here was in early times a tower, which Gideon destroyed (Jud. viii. 8—17). A city was afterwards rebuilt and fortified by Jeroboam (1 Ki. xii. 52). . . . *sun rose*. Sorrow may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning. The day smiles on him who enters it as a prevailer with God. . . . *halted . thigh*. He bore the mark of the conflict. He should not be exalted above
- 32 measure (2 Cor. xii. 7). . . . *Therefore*, in remembrance of this humiliation in victory of their great ancestor. . . . *sineus* (*nervus ischiadicus*). The principal nerve near the hip, which is easily injured by a violent strain in wrestling. . . . *unto . day*, a remark still applicable.

Solitary Musings—Midnight Wrestling—Morning Sunshine.

- I. SOLITARY MUSINGS. Jacob was left alone. Before him was the river Jabbok. Beyond the river his wives and children. Still beyond them, on the march to Esau, were the presents he had sent. The servants full of wonder and fear for their master's sake. The wives and children anxious. Jacob once more alone, as many years before he was when passing the same spot (*v.* 10). He would think of the past. How greatly he had been prospered. How little he had deserved. Now he feels how entirely he is in the hands of God. The disposing of his wealth is with God. It is a question whether God will own the means he has so far employed. Jacob is doubtful and perplexed. He has prayed already (*cr.* 9—12), and exhausted all his arguments. He can now only cast himself on the undeserved mercy of God. Night a good time for such reflections. David often meditated thus in the night watches. Jesus also spent his nights in meditation and prayer. In darkness and silence there is less to divert attention than in the daytime.
- II. MIDNIGHT WRESTLING. Jacob thus musing, becomes aware of the presence of some mysterious person. Called a man, because in a human form and nature. The angel of the covenant in disguise. Jacob perceives who his companion is. Seizes this mysterious personage, and declares he will not let him go unless a blessing is granted. The angel struggles to be released, doubtless intending by thus wrestling to teach that prayer should be bold, earnest, importunate, persevering. Physical wrestling a type of wrestling in spirit. The angel prevailed not. He had put forth only sufficient strength to excite resistance and earnestness, without causing discouragement to Jacob's mind. Unable to release himself, he *touches*, and disables Jacob. Thus weakened, Jacob still clings to the angel. Will not let him go without a blessing. Jacob conquers. His name is changed. Hitherto he had been a mere supplanter by human methods, now he shall prevail on higher principles. As a "God's fighter," he shall fight God's battles with spiritual weapons. Faith, prayer, &c.
- III. MORNING SUNSHINE. "The sun rose upon him as he passed over Peniel." The brightest day in his life was that in which the sun rose upon him a man blessed of God ; and acknowledged to be a prevailer. With his bodily infirmity, he was a stronger man than he had ever been before. "Clothed with might by *His* Spirit in the inner man," he was "strong" though "weak." He felt better able to meet Esau, a lame man, than he had felt before in the pride of strength. Strength of soul the highest form of strength. Without this how weak are the strongest (*ill.* Samson, Goliath).

LEARN—

- I. Select fit times and themes for profitable meditation.
- II. Our affairs should be all placed in the hands of God.
- III. Saying a prayer not truly praying. Wrestling importunity.
- IV. The dark hour of earnest humble prayer is followed by sunshine in the heart.

B.C. 1739. Gen. xxxiii. 1—15.

- 1 *And*. Endowed with the angel's blessing. Halting. Advancing towards his brother. . . . *lifted eyes*, looked steadfastly. . . . *Esau*, whose approach he dreaded. . . . *came*. Probably he meant to avenge the wrongs he had received, but his mind underwent a change as he approached. . . . 400 *men*, sufficient to have overwhelmed Jacob, had not God changed Esau's mind. . . . *divided children*. Giving them to the
- 2 care of those to whom they belonged. . . . *he put*. The places allotted to them indicate their place in Jacob's affection. . . . *handmaids foremost*, in the first group, as being the place of most danger. . . . *Leah after*, where peril was less. . . . *Rachel Joseph hindermost*, as best beloved, where the danger was least. Joseph, too, was the youngest child,
- 3 and only four years old. . . . *passed before them*. Took the most dangerous place. This was not his intention before he wrestled with the angel and prevailed. Compare his first plan (xxxii. 6—8) with his present act, and note how truly he is *Israel*, rather than *Jacob*. . . . *bowed* (xviii. 2; xlii. 6; xliii. 26), which, now that he knew he was safe, was magnanimous respect. . . . *seven times*, utmost respect. The token repeated
- 4 at intervals as he approached. . . . *ran*, cordially, eagerly. . . . *embraced*, &c., as the Arabs meet to this day (*Porter's Damascus*, i. 167). . . . *wept*, tears of reconciliation, forgiveness, joy, gratitude. . . . *he, Esau*. . . .
- 5 *who those*. Surprised at seeing so many. . . . *God given* (xlvi. 9; Ps. cxxvii. 3; Is. viii. 18). . . . *then*, in succession. . . . *bowed*, showing respect
- 8 to Jacob's brother. . . . *all drove*. See *marg.* (xxxii. 16). . . . *he, Jacob*. . . .
- 9 *grace* (xxxii. 5). . . . *I enough*. It is seldom that any, even the rich, will
- 10 say as much. . . . *keep*, lit. be that to thee that is thine. . . . *Jacob*, anxious that the present should be accepted, if no longer to appease wrath, at least as a token of good will. . . . *have seen*, &c. (xliii. 3; 2 Sam. iii. 13; xiv. 24, 28, 32; Mat. xviii. 10). There might have been a frown instead of
- 11 a smile. As God smiles in forgiveness, so dost thou. . . . *my blessing* (Jud. i. 15; 1 Sam. xxv. 27; xxx. 26; 2 Ki. v. 15). . . . *because God*. He attributes all to God. . . . *enough*, Heb. all things (Phil. iv. 18). . . . *urged*, with such arguments (2 Ki. v. 23). . . . *took*, to please his brother.
- 12 It pains a generous mind to decline a favour. . . . *he, Esau*. . . . *our journey*, together, these brothers, whom anger had so long separated. . . .
- 13 *before thee*, with my 400 men to open and guard the way. . . . *he, Jacob*. . . . *said*, showing his regard for his flocks and children, and his reliance upon the protection of God. . . . *overdrive*, in their endeavour to keep up
- 14 with the march. . . . *pass over*, Jordan. . . . *softly*, gently. "Who goeth softly surely goeth." . . . *according*, measuring his pace by that of his flocks and children, &c. . . . *endure*, hold out. See *marg.* . . . *At Seir*,
- 15 where Esau dwelt, and where Jacob proposed to visit him. . . . *leave*, to guide, help, protect. . . . *needeth*? I have God for my guide, helper, protector. . . . *let grace*. Grant me this favour also (xxxiv. 11; xlvii. 25; Ru. ii. 13).

The Approach—Reconciliation—and Conduct of the Brothers.

- I. THE APPROACH OF THE BROTHERS. (1.) Of *Esau*. At the head of 400 armed men. Probably at the first meditating revenge, or to make a great display of his power. But Jacob was a man of prayer. Had often asked God to guard and keep him. Had the night before this meeting so mightily prevailed in prayer that his name had been altered. In answer to the prayers of Jacob, the revengeful feelings of Esau depart. As he draws nigh, Esau feels his heart drawn out in love towards his brother. (2.) Of *Jacob*. Full of hope and confidence. Lame, and yet strong. He is now the prevailer. The sun shining upon him, and better still, God lifts upon him the light of his countenance. He had sent forward the present, and now places himself in advance of all the rest. He—the prevailer—does not fear to meet the first storm of his brother's rage.
- II. RECONCILIATION OF THE BROTHERS. Esau, the offended and injured, instead of taking vengeance on Jacob, having his heart softened by the grace of God, runs towards Jacob. Does not proudly wait for Jacob to approach, and then upbraid him for his past conduct. Ran towards him. Then spoke not a single word. Could not. Too full of joy at once more meeting his long-lost brother. They throw themselves in one another's arms. The kiss of reconciliation. Tears of joy, gratitude. Tears too, it may be, of penitence on both sides. Each needed to be forgiven by the other. Each had done wrong. Jacob, in that he had deprived his brother of the birthright and the blessing; and Esau, in that he had left his father's house, and harboured wrong feelings against his brother, and been the cause of his long exile. Persons offended with each other have often much need of each other's forgiveness. The pardon should be on both sides. He who forgives should also seek forgiveness.
- III. THE CONDUCT OF THE BROTHERS. (1.) Of *Jacob*. He entreats Esau to accept his present. Will take no denial. Thus shows the sincerity of his affection. Is unwilling that Esau should at all go out of his way to guard him. Has sufficient trust in God alone. (2.) Of *Esau*. At length, to please his brother, accepts the present he makes. It is often as kind to accept, as to make a present. He kindly received the wives and children of Jacob. Goes on the way before Jacob, to make the way clear. Acts as his brother's guide and vanguard. Shows his forgiveness by deeds, as well as by words. Without practical kindness words are "sounding brass," &c.

LEARN—

- I. In all angry partings, remember that a future meeting will come.
- II. God can still the raging of the fiercest storm of passion and revenge.
- III. The reconciliation of brethren, a fit and beautiful sight.
- IV. We have all sinned against God, and need his forgiveness.
- V. By causing Esau to forgive his brother, God shows how ready he is to forgive us.
- VI. Our elder brother, Jesus, has obtained a full pardon for us.

Gen. xxxv. 23—29.

Jacob's twelve sons were as follows: By Leah 6, viz. (1.) Reuben; (2.) Simeon; (3.) Levi; (4.) Judah; (5.) Issachar; (6.) Zebulun. By Rachel 2, viz. (1.) Joseph; (2.) Benjamin. By Bilhah (Rachel's maid) 2, viz. (1.) Dan (2.) Naphtali. By Zilpah (Leah's maid) 2, viz. (1.) Gad; (2.) Asher. All, but Benjamin, born in Padan-aram. Ac. vii. 8, word patriarch *sig.* head of a tribe or family. Besides these sons, Jacob had a dau., Dinah, by Leah (xxx. 21).

I. REUBEN = *Behold, a son!* (Leah, Gen. xxix. 31, 32). Weak, impulsive. Some good qualities. Would not plot against Joseph. Tried to save him. Grieved at his loss (xxxvii. 21, 22, 29, 30; xlii. 22). Forfeited his birth-right to Joseph. Persuaded his father to let Benjamin go into Egypt. Offered his own sons as hostages (xlii. 37). His tribe settled trans-Jordan, on the N. of Dead Sea, and was therefore one of the first taken captive to Assyria (1 Ch. v. 26). (Heshbon, Peor, Nebo.)

II. SIMEON = *a hearkening* (Leah, xxix. 33). One of the least amiable of the 12. Took revenge on men of Shechem (xxxiv.). Prominent in plot on Joseph (xlii. 19, 24). His wickedness not overlooked (xlix. 5—7). His tribe settled in S W. of Palestine (Gaza, Esheol, Bethuel, &c.).

III. LEVI = *joining* (Leah, xxix. 34). Joined Simeon in vengeance on Shechemites, xxxiv. 25—31). Holy zeal of Levites on occasion of golden calf, procured blessing and distinction (Ex. xxxii. 26—29). Died, aged 137 (Ex. vi. 16). Portioned with other tribes.

IV. JUDAH = *praised* (Leah, xxix. 35). An improving character, though dark at first. Sold Joseph rather than kill him (xxxvii. 26—28). Would not part with Benjamin (xlii. 3—14). Good conduct in Egypt (xlv. 14—34). The royalty conferred upon him (xlix. 8—12; 1 Ch. v. 2). Tribe settled between Simeon and Dead Sea (Bethlehem, Hebron, &c.).

V. ISSACHAR = *reward* (Leah, xxx. 17, 18). Character uncertain. Tribe settled N. of part afterwards called Samaria (Jezreel, Endor, Dothan, Nain).

VI. ZEBULUN = *habitation* (Leah, xxx. 19, 20). Character uncertain. Tribe settled N. of Issachar in part called Galilee (Carmel, Tabor, Nazareth).

VII. DAN = *judge* (Bilhah, xxx. 6; Ex. i. 4). Character uncertain. Tribe settled on sea-board N. of Simeon (Gilead, Jabbok).

VIII. NAPHTALI = *"wrestling"* (Bilhah, xxx. 8; 1 Ch. ii. 2). Character uncertain. Tribe settled N. of Zebulun and E. of L. Merom (Caper-naum, Chorazin).

IX. GAD = *"a troop cometh,"* or *"in felicity"* (Zilpah, xxx. 10, 11). Character uncertain. Tribe settled E. of Jordan, N. of Reuben (Gilead, Jabbok, Ashtaroth).

X. ASHER = *"happy"* (Zilpah, xxx. 12, 13). Character uncertain. Tribe settled on sea-board W. of Naphtali (Sarepta, Tyre, &c.).

XI. JOSEPH = *"he will add"* (Rachel, xxx. 23, 24). Most eventful history (see lessons 32—47). His two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, had each a tribal settlement. Half-tribe of M. north of Gad and W. of Sea of Galilee (Argob, Dan); other half-tribe of M. south of Issachar from Jordan to the Medit. Sea (Megiddo, Taanach); E. south half of part afterwards called Samaria, from Jordan to sea (Samaria, Ebal, Gerizim, Shiloh). Joseph died, aged 110 (xlviii. 1; Ex. xiii. 19; Jos. xxiv. 32).

XII. BENJAMIN = *son of right-hand* (Rachel, xxxv. 16—20). For interesting events of early life, see lessons 38—41. Tribe settled south of Ephraim. See *Genealogical Chart*. D. B. N. S. i. 429, 432. S. J. C. i. 71.

Names—Character—Providence.

- I. SIGNIFICANCE OF NAMES. Proper names had among *them* (the Hebrews) a deeper meaning, and were more closely connected in men's thoughts with character and condition, than among any other ancient nation with the history and character of which we are acquainted. This is apparent from the care taken in the sacred writings to record the origin of so many names of individuals and of places, from the frequent allusions to them as significant, and the remarks made upon their meaning, and from the peculiar employment of them on important and solemn occasions, when given or changed, to mark some great transaction or event, to form titles of honour; or to record a promise, or threat, or prophecy. (See *Proper Names in the Bible*, by W. F. Wilkinson, M.A., 14, 15, &c.)
- II. DIVERSITY OF CHARACTER. Among these twelve sons of one man no two precisely alike. Dark and bright traits of character strangely intermingle in this household. Joseph seems to have served the Lord from his youth, and Simeon appears to have been the darkest character of the twelve. As children often differ in complexion and stature, &c., so do they also in taste, moral character, &c. Often less like their immediate progenitors than their remoter ancestors; pointing far back to past times in their moral and physical portrait. How far back *we* point to the source of the evil there is in *us*. Diversity of bodily, mental, and moral qualities a blessing, when under the influence of Divine grace; otherwise a source of mischief and sorrow, engendering rivalry and strife.
- III. WAYS OF PROVIDENCE. How marvellous the history wrought out in the world by means of these twelve men and their descendants! How wondrously providence blended these unlike characters for working out his purposes! He maketh the wrath of men to praise him. While imagining they were working their own will, their acts were subordinate, by the power of God, to high and gracious purposes. Yet the good, in the end, attain to the most honourable places, and the widest influence. The youngest, and most despised, and helpless, are in the end advanced. *We* often spoil the best instruments, and turn but sorry work out of most refined materials. God brings good out of evil. A world of beauty out of chaos; a great people out of these twelve shepherds. Think of another twelve whose work it was to lay the foundation of a still greater and more enduring kingdom. They also were shepherds in another sense.

LEARN—

- I. Among all names there is only one whereby we can be saved. "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people," &c.
- II. Natural differences of character may be purified by divine grace. The worst may be saved by Christ, the best need his salvation.
- III. Cast yourselves upon the bountiful care and inexhaustible wisdom of providence. He who of such material laid the foundations of a great nation, can make all things work together for our good.

B.C. 1728. Gen. xxxvii. 1—11.

- 1 *Jacob*, after all his wanderings. . . . *dwelt*, became a settled resident. . . . in *land*, of promise (xii. 1). . . . *father* Abraham. . . . *stranger*, and fo-
- 2 reigner (xxvii. 8; xxiii. 4; xviii. 4; xxxvi. 7; Heb. xi. 9). . . . *generations*, family records. . . . *seventeen*, too often represented in pictures as a mere child. . . . *flock* (Ps. lxxx. 1). Joseph tending his flock, was himself cared for by his heavenly Shepherd. . . . *brethren* (except Benjamin), more especially those named, as nearest his own age (Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher). . . . *wives*: called wives, not so really. . . . *evil report*. Had their conduct been good, the report would not have been evil. It does not follow that Joseph was a mischievous tale-bearer. Jacob may have inquired of one whom he trusted. Joseph may have felt it his duty to report that his brothers were wasting their father's property, or dishonouring his
- 3 name (1 Sam. ii. 22—24). . . . *more*, for which he has been censured thoughtlessly by those who do not consider the excellence of Joseph's character. . . . *because* *age*, and also son of his beloved Rachel. . . . *made*, provided. . . . *colours*, lit. a long coat with sleeves (Jud. v. 30; 2 Sam. xiii. 18). . . . *hated* (xxvii. 41; xlix. 23), because of his partiality. They
- 4 should have sympathized with an old man's affection. . . . *peaceably*,
- 5 kindly. . . . *dream*, which was more than a mere dream. A vision of the future, to compensate his present ill usage at the hands of his brothers. . . . *hated* *more*, as they saw in the dream the promise of his future pre-emi-
- 6 nence, and feared it might come true. . . . *said*, in guileless innocence. . . .
- 7 *this dream*, at which he was himself surprised. . . . *behold*, it is a matter of astonishment. . . . *we*, brothers. . . . *binding*, tying. . . . *sheaves*, bundles of corn. . . . *arose*, of itself. . . . *obseisance*, did homage, bowed to the
- 8 earth. . . . *said*. They perceived at once the meaning of the dream. . . . *hated* *more*, being filled with fear and envy. . . . *words*, report of this dream, and the news he had taken to his father concerning them. Yet, he could not help the dream (Ps. xxxv. 19; lxix. 4; Jo. xv. 25). . . .
- 9 *another dream*, which, being in nature like the former, with more striking particulars, excited greater wonder. . . . *sun* *moon* *stars*. Father, mother, and his eleven brethren (xvi. 29). The obeisance of the heavenly bodies to him, would be imprinted as a great wonder on his youth-
- 10 ful imagination. . . . *told* *father*, because in this dream he was also concerned. . . . *rebuked*, at the first chiding him. . . . *What*. What does it mean? How do you interpret it? But it was others who applied the meaning and discovered it. Jacob seems to have wished, by a seeming rebuke, to pacify Joseph's brethren. If so, then here was another instance
- 11 of the weakness of Jacob. . . . *envied*. They were not consoled by the rebuke of their father; but envied, believing the dream would be fulfilled. Each would have liked such a dream. . . . *father*, who had had dreams and visions himself (Bethel, Mahanaim, Peniel). . . . *observed*, meditated upon it, and doubtless thought more of Joseph from that day.

The Many-coloured Coat—the Evil Report—the Wonderful Dreams.

- I. THE MANY-COLOURED COAT. The margin says many "*pieces*." May have been "*many colours*" as well. Such coats are not uncommon for young people in the East at this day (*Rannolf's Travels*, pt. I., p. 89), in Syria, Persia, and India. Made probably of strips of variously-coloured cloth. This Jacob gave to Joseph because he was a "son of his old age;" a phrase understood by most to mean that Jacob was an old man when Joseph was born; but which Dr Janieson says means that Joseph had—to use a familiar phrase—an old head on young shoulders. This coat may be regarded: (1.) *As a gift of affection*. It may be questioned how far it was wise to show special love in so marked a manner. Jacob, knowing his other sons, must have been sure that their envy would be excited. (2.) *As a reward of merit*. Some reward less noticeable would have been better. Joseph was made overseer, or chief shepherd, for such is the meaning of *v.* 2, and hence it might be also (3.) *A badge of office*.
- II. THE EVIL REPORT. If Joseph were a mere tale-bearer he would be blamable. But as chief shepherd he was bound to state what was the conduct of his brothers, if they were under-shepherds. Yet it was unfortunate that he should be put over men who were so much older than himself. Again it may be urged, that if they had done no evil, there could have been no evil report. Their wiser and better course would have been, to have approved themselves to their father. Surely it would have pleased Joseph to have brought a good report, had it been possible. Happier for all would it have been, had the bearer of the evil report been any other than a *son* and a *brother*. Yet perhaps Jacob had none whom he could trust in this matter so well as Joseph.
- III. THE WONDERFUL DREAMS. Dreams in that age more influential than with us. No sure word of prophecy. Abram, Isaac, and Jacob had had wonderful dreams, or rather visions. Such had doubtless been often related. Hence these sons of Jacob were prepared to consider dreams with much reverence and awe. Joseph knowing, from what he had heard, that many dreams were of God, would regard his own dreams in this light. The character of *each* dream, and the coincidence of the *two*, would fix attention and awaken thought. It is evident (*vv.* 8, 10) that those to whom he related his dreams saw the meaning at once. And also that they regarded them as divine communications, otherwise they would not have been troubled by them. But believing them to be divine messages, they should not have been angry. It is clear that their hearts were not right with God, or they would not have opposed his will.

LEARN—

- I. To guard against the appearance of partiality in our families.
- II. God is no respecter of persons.
- III. To abstain from the appearance of evil, that there be no evil report concerning us.

B.C. 1728. Gen. xxxvii. 12—35.

- 12 *his brethren*. After these things (less. 32) and with their hatred unjustifiably increased. . . . *went*, from home. . . . *Shechem*, called also Sicheim (Gen. xii. 6), and Sychem (Ac. vii. 16), sit. ab. 7 m. S. of Samaria, now
- 13 called Nablous. Pop. 8000. . . . *I. send*: confidence in Joseph. . . .
- 14 *Here. I.*: ready obedience. . . . *see*. Heb. see the peace of thy brethren. Paternal love and anxiety. . . . *Hebron*, 20 m. S. of Jerusalem, 35 m.
- 15 from Shechem. . . . *man*, of that country. . . . *field*, country unenclosed. . . .
- 16 *what*, seeing Joseph was a stranger. . . . *brethren*, whom he would
- 17 describe. . . . *Dothan* (= two wells), 18 m. further north (2 Ki. vi. 13). . . .
- 18 *saw*, and recognized. . . . *conspired* (1 Sam. xix. 1; Ps. xxxi. 13; Jo. xi. 53; Ac. xxiii. 12). . . . *slay*, so intense was their hatred. . . . *dreamer*. Heb. master of dreams. This epithet shows the cause of their animosity. . . . *pit*,
- 20 cave, out of sight. . . . *say*, tell a lie. One sin often necessitates another. *evil*, wild, ravenous. . . . *we. see*. They thought that thus they could
- 21 thwart Providence (Pr. i. 11, 16; vi. 17; xxvii. 4). . . . *Reuben* (less. 31), his eldest brother (xlii. 22). . . . *not kill*. More than this, he dared not
- 22 propose. . . . *pit*, prob. a deep and huge empty cistern. Many such now found about Dothan (*T. L. B.* 287). . . . *rid*, deliver (Germ. *retten*). . . .
- 23 *to deliver*. This Reuben intended to do privately. . . . *came. pass*. This plot was matured as Joseph approached. . . . *stript*. How surprised must he have been at this rough reception. . . . *coat*, which was another
- 24 cause of offence. . . . *pit. empty. water*. It was evidently designed to
- 25 hold water. These *beers* "are nearly all dry, even in winter." . . . *eat bread*. They could eat, after having consigned Joseph, as they thought, to starvation! (Pr. xxx. 20; Amos vi. 6). . . . *Ishmeclites*, or Midianites (*v.* 28). . . . *Gilead*, E. of Jordan. . . . *spicery. balm. myrrh*. Aromatic
- 26 balsams or gums produced here (Jer. viii. 22; xlv. 11). . . . *Judah* (less. 31). . . . *profit*. He would avoid murder, yet be revenged on Joseph, and get
- gain (Job xvi. 18). . . . *sell*, and thus he unconsciously helped to fulfil the
- 27 dream. . . . *let not* (1 Sam. xviii. 17). . . . *for*. The same reason should have saved Joseph from molestation. . . . *brother. flesh* (xxix. 14; xlii. 21). . . . *content*, lit. hearkened. . . . *then*, as they were talking. . . .
- 28 *Midianites* (Jud. vi. 3), men who were merchants. Dealers in all things saleable. . . . *drew*. With what tale did they satisfy these men? . . .
- twenty. pieces* (Ps. cv. 17; Ac. vii. 9; Matt. xxvii. 9). Even slaves were valued higher (Ex. xxi. 32). . . . *Egypt*. The great highway from Gilead
- 29 to Egypt still passes near this place. . . . *Reuben*, who appears to have left his brethren when he made the bargain (*vv.* 21, 22). . . . *returned*, to
- carry out his intention of delivering his brother. . . . *rent. clothes*, token
- 30 of great grief (Job i. 20). . . . *child*. All. to his comparative youth. . . .
- is not* (xlii. 13, 36; Jer. xxxi. 15). . . . *and I. go?* As the eldest, he felt
- 31 himself responsible for Joseph. . . . *dipped*: "to tip" (taval), "usual meaning applied to the part of the verb which occurs here, is to put a part of the liquid on the object touched" (*D. B. N. S.* i. 473). . . .
- 32 *found*. A falsehood. They knew their father would surmise what they desired. . . . *beast. without doubt*, not an improbable occurrence. Likely to
- 33 happen even at this day. . . . *rent. clothes* (2 Sam. iii. 31). . . . *many days*, of formal mourning (Deut. xxxiv. 8; Is. lx. 20). But his sorrow long remained. He never forgot Joseph. . . . *daughters*. We have the name of
- 35 only one—Dinah (less. 31). . . . *comfort* (2 Sam. xii. 17). The best comfort would have been the truth about Joseph.

The Victim—the Plotters—the Plot.

- I. THE VICTIM. *Joseph*. What were his crimes? (1.) He had done his duty as superintendent of the shepherds; even though it must have been painful to him to convey bad tidings about his brethren, and painful to grieve his father's mind by doing so. Yet he only discharged the duty of his office. The fault was theirs, not his. (2.) He had been marked as his father's special favourite and confidant. But they should have tried to be more worthy of trust themselves. It was sad that in so large a family there was only one who could be trusted; and that one was hated, "despised and rejected," for telling the truth (Jo. vii. 7; viii. 37). Would they not have despised him as a coward for failing to speak the truth? (3.) He had been favoured with wonderful dreams, in which their future subordinate relation was clearly indicated. Their anger on account of these dreams, for which Joseph was not responsible, was rebellion against God.
- II. THE PLOTTERS. (1.) *Ten* against one. Cowardice of this. Combination of thought and strength for a wicked purpose. (2.) *Ten brothers* against one brother. Fratricidal struggles the worst of all. Of all relatives, such near ones as these should agree. (3.) *Ten men*, and brothers, against a youthful brother. Might and numbers are not always a proof of right (once, all the world was against our Elder Brother). (4.) *Ten wicked men* against one *good* man. "Though hand join in hand, wickedness shall not go unpunished." (5.) *Ten sons* against a *father*. In plotting against Joseph they were fighting against Jacob. Those who oppose Jesus are rebelling against God.
- III. THE PLOT. (1.) The *opportunity*. (a.) They are away from home. (b.) They are alone. (c.) Joseph, in his coat of honour, approaches to inspect the flocks. (2.) The *conspiracy*. "The dreamer cometh." All agree on one point. Joseph to be put out of the way. First resolve to kill him and tell a lie to hide the crime (v. 20). Reuben intercedes, intending to rescue him (v. 22). They agree to this, thinking he would die of starvation. Thus they would not shed his blood, and yet would take his life. They strip off his offending coat. Approach of the merchants. Judah would make a profit by the transaction. He little thought of the great profit his wickedness would yield (see Gen. xlv. 7, 8). Joseph is sold. Imagine his cries and tears, &c. (see xlii. 21). The remorse of Reuben, and the joy of the rest. (3.) The *consequences*. One sin leads to another. They must resort to lying, &c. The trouble that comes upon Jacob (vv. 34, 35).

LEARN—

- I. Innocent people are often surrounded by evil (Jo. xvi. 33).
- II. Virtue and truth to be pursued, notwithstanding danger.
- III. One sin leads to another. Ultimate concealment impossible.
- IV. God makes the wrath of man to praise him.
- V. Jesus has saved us from going down into the pit, and has redeemed us from bondage.

B.C. 1717. Gen. xl. 1—23.

- 1 *after . things*, i. e. the events narrated in xxxix. . . . *butler* (Neh. i. 11; ii. 1), or cup-bearer, an officer whose duty it was to provide the wines for the royal table, and to taste, first, what he handed to the king. . . . *baker*,
 2 or chief cook. . . . *offended*: very likely a light offence. . . . *Pharaoh*, the name, not of an individual, but of a dynasty. There were many
 3 *Pharaohs*. . . . *wroth* (Pr. xvi. 14). . . . *ward*, guard (A.S. *weard*) (hence *rereward* = rear-guard; warden = one who guards; wards of a lock, hospital, city; divisions for better guarding or supervision). . . .
 4 *captain . guard*, for their safe keeping. . . . *place Joseph*. Note the hand of Providence in this. . . . *charged Joseph* (xxxix. 21—23). Had they been committed to another prison, or had Joseph's character been different, this had not fallen out (Pr. xvi. 7). . . . *he served*, as a prisoner of inferior rank. . . . *season*, some time, till the plan of Providence un-
 5,6 folded. . . . *one night*, the more remarkable. . . . *sad*, perplexed. They
 7 were superstitious and troubled. . . . *Wherefore* (Neh. ii. 2). . . . *look*, Heb.
 8 are your faces evil. . . . *interpretations . God?* Joseph piously reminded them of this, as opposed to the pretensions of astrologers and the like
 9 (xli. 46; Dan. ii. 11, 28, 47). . . . *dream*, which corresponded with his
 10 occupation. . . . *vine*. The vine abundant in Egypt. . . . *three branches* (v. 12). . . . *was*, &c. In the short space of the time of dreaming there
 11 was the whole process of growing, ripening, and wine-making. . . . *cup . hand*. I, a prisoner, dreamed I was again in the palace. . . . *Pharaoh's*
 12 *hand*, and I was in office as before. . . . *This* (xli. 12, 25; Judg. vii. 14; Dan. ii. 36; iv. 19). . . . *lift . head*, which now hangs sadly down. . . .
 14 *place*: office (2 Ki. xxv. 27; Ps. iii. 3; Jer. lli. 31). . . . *think . me*. His trust in God does not absolve him from the use of right means (Lu. xxiii. 42). . . . *kindness* (Jos. ii. 22; 1 Sam. xx. 14, 15; 2 Sam. ix. 1; 1 Ki.
 15 ii. 7). . . . *house*, prison. . . . *For*, &c. He relates his story, confident of the
 16 result. . . . *when . good*. He was encouraged, and told his dream. . . . *head*.
 17 The usual way of carrying burdens. . . . *bakemeats*, food prepared in an
 18 oven. . . . *three baskets* = the three branches of the other dream. . . .
 19 *lift . head . off* = behead. . . . *hang . tree . birds*. "This scene may still be witnessed in the valley of the Nile. The body of a criminal, as used to be the case in Britain, is suspended in a public place, and the birds eat the flesh. Ravenous birds still abound. Vulture, raven, hooded crow." D.
 20 *B. N. S. i. 476*. . . . *birthday*: the keeping of the birthday an ancient custom (Matt. xiv. 6). Should remind us of God's mercy and goodness. Ebenezer (1 Sam. vii. 12). . . . *feast* (Mar. vi. 21). A grand domestic banquet (Dan. v. 1). . . . *servants*, officers and lords of his court. . . .
 21 *lifted*, reckoned, numbered. See marg. (Matt. xxv. 19). . . . *restored*, as Joseph had predicted. . . . *and he*, as before time. . . . *cup*, the wine cup, of which it was the duty of the bearer to drink first, to assure the king
 22 that there was no poison therein. . . . *hanged . baker*, as it had been also
 23 foretold (v. 19). . . . *forgot him*. Too commonly the case that those are forgotten who have been friends in adversity. Thus men forget God (Job xix. 14; Ps. xxxi. 12; Eccl. ix. 15; Amos vi. 6).

D. B. N. S. i. 476. S. J. C. i. 75. Jamieson's *East. Man*, *Old Test.* 135 ff. K. D. R. I. i. 355—377 (new ed.). Dickenson's *Religion teaching by Example*, 35.

Prison Occupations—Prison Companions—Prison Dreams.

- I. PRISON OCCUPATIONS. The crime is the disgrace, and not the scaffold or the prison. Good men have often been imprisoned, while many wicked have escaped. Yet, notwithstanding the prison, these sufferers are amongst our heroes and martyrs. Milton said, "There shall one day be a resurrection of names and reputations." Bunyan, Baxter, &c., are not honoured the less for the dungeons in which they suffered. Next to escaping the prison, the best thing is, like Joseph, to suffer innocently. Joseph in prison. Suffering often hardens the bad and purifies and manifests the good. Joseph's character could not be hid. Even the keepers saw how different he was from the ordinary criminals committed to their care (see Prov. xvi. 7). The prisoner becomes a keeper (so many of the captive Jews, as Daniel, Nehemiah, Mordecai, were exalted). Is so much trusted as to be freed from supervision (xxxviii. 22, 23). God, who was with him in Canaan, is with him in Egypt, and in prison. He does not forsake his friends in distresses brought upon them by their fidelity to him.
- II. PRISON COMPANIONS. The butler and baker, two officers of importance in eastern and ancient courts. Yet even these were not spared by a capricious and absolute monarch. "Oh, how wretched is that poor man that hangs on princes' favours!" In a palace one day, a prison the next. In ancient times a courtier's office was often, like the Bridge of Sighs at Venice, "a palace and a prison on each hand." These men may have suffered justly; like the malefactors who were crucified with Jesus (Lu. xxiii. 41). The worst punishment of the good is forced fellowship with the wicked. As providence overruled the wrath of Joseph's brothers, so now he overrules the wrath of Pharaoh. One of these degraded officials shall be the instrument of Joseph's release and exaltation.
- III. PRISON DREAMS. That is:—the dreams of the butler and baker. The subject was so strange, and the recollection so vivid, that they were troubled. Dreamland a mysterious region to the ancients. No interpreter of dreams in the prison, they thought. Joseph's inquiry. He thinks of his own dreams, doubtless, and the transitory trouble they had brought him into. He gives the praise to God, as the true interpreter of dreams. By the help of divine illumination he reveals the meaning of their dreams. No doubt he saw that God had sent them those dreams for him to interpret; and that his connection with these men would work out the fulfilment of his own dreams. It is certain that what was foretold by their dreams, would have occurred even if they had never dreamed at all. Hence it was clear that there was a purpose in their dreaming, and in their relating their dreams to Joseph. Probably had not Joseph been in prison, they would not have dreamed as they did.

LEARN—I. If we suffer, let it be for righteousness' sake.

II. When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies, &c.

B.C. 1715. Gen. xli. 1—14, 33—45.

1 *came . pass*, i.e. fell out in the order of the Divine plan. . . . *two . years*, from the first imprisonment. . . . *Pharaoh dreamed*. It was now *his* turn.
 2 *river*, the Nile. . . . *out . river*. The river Nile is the source of the fertility and plenty of the land of Egypt. By the degree in which the water rises, when the snows of the mountains melt, can be predicted the extent of country laid under water, and consequent fertility. To measure its rise a scale is provided, marked on a pillar in a temple in the capital—Cairo. *seven*, answering to seven years. . . . *kine . meadow*. Note the connection
 3 between these and the river. . . . *seven other*, and *after*. . . . *leanfleshed*, hunger-bitten. . . . *stood*, did not eat. The grass of the meadow had been
 4 devoured by the first seven. . . . *eat . seven*. A most astonishing sight, suggestive of their great hunger. . . . *awoke*, with a vivid recollection of the
 5 dream. . . . *second time*, in the same night. . . . *seven ears . one stalk*. Stalks of many-eared wheat (*Triticum compositum*) not unusually met with.
 6 *rank* = fat, full in the ear. . . . *blasted . east wind*, "which, blowing from the sandy steppes and deserts in the vicinity of the Red Sea, and from the Arabian peninsula, often withers the vegetation of Lower Egypt" (*Kalisch*).
 7 *devoured*, another strange sight. The thin ears absorbed the good, and were in turn blasted. . . . *awoke*, with these two pictures imprinted on his
 8 memory. . . . *troubled*, greatly perplexed (Dan. ii. 1; iv. 5—19). . . . *magicians*, soothsayers, astrologers (Ex. vii. 11, 12; Isa. xxix. 14; Dan. i. 20; ii. 2; iv. 7). . . . *wise men*, men of science, priests, &c.
 9 (Ac. vii. 22). . . . *none*, because see xl. 8. . . . *Then*, it was perhaps of providence that he did not speak before; Joseph might have been liberated and now far away. . . . *this day*. There will come a day in which *we*, too,
 10 shall remember our faults. . . . *was wroth*. The butler relates the story
 13 of his prison dreams, and the Hebrew interpreter. . . . *so it was*, so it
 14 happened to us. A hint to Pharaoh to send for Joseph. . . . *Then* (Ps. cv. 20), having heard the strange story. . . . *hastily*, made him run (*Heb.*).
dungeon (1 Sam. ii. 8; Ps. cxiii. 7, 8). . . . *shaved . raiment*, a hint of his poor prison dress and appearance.

[*vv. 14—32*. Joseph predicts the years of plenty and of famine; interpreting the dreams.]

33 *therefore*, he adds advice to the interpretation. . . . *discreet*, honest. . . .
 34 *fifth part*, so great would be the plenty of these years, that this portion
 35 would be enough. . . . *gather*, let none be wasted because of the plenty.
 36,37 *perish not*. *Heb.* be not cut off. . . . *good*, reasonable. . . . *eyes*, mind.
 38,39 *as this . man*. Wondrous penetration of a heathen! . . . *Forasmuch*, &c.
 40,41 A good reason. . . . *house*, an household and nation. . . . *See*, take know-
 42 ledge. . . . *ring* (Esth. iii. 10; viii. 2, 8), signet-ring, to seal despatches.
 43 *arrayed* (Esth. viii. 15). . . . *chain* (Dan. v. 7, 29). . . . *second chariot*, as
 44 viceroy. . . . *made ruler*. Thus was he suddenly exalted. . . . *I . Pharaoh*, and being king, and having the power, I hereby ordain. . . . *without thee*,
 45 except at thy command. . . . *Zaphnath-paaneah* = revealer of secrets. . . . *Asenath* = *she is of Neith* (the Egyptian Minerva?). . . . *Poti-pherah*, of which word, Potiphar is a contraction. . . . *priest*, to distinguish from Potiphar, the officer of the guard. . . . *On* = light, specially the sun. Ancient city of Lower Egypt, where was the famous temple of the sun. . . . *went out*. To make a general survey of lands under cultivation, and to make arrangements for storing surplus produce. *D. B. N. S.* i. 476. *S. J. C.* i. 77.

The Forgotten Prisoner—the Troubled Monarch—the Exalted Captive.

- I. THE FORGOTTEN PRISONER. Forgotten by man, but remembered by God. While the butler was forgetting, God was thinking about Joseph, and so ordering events that even the forgetful butler should be presently of use. Men are apt to forget those who have done them a favour. Out of sight, out of mind. The butler in the palace not the same man as the butler in prison. Yet even his forgetfulness overruled for Joseph's good. God will make him remember at the right time. Joseph remains in prison. Feels, as the time glides on, that the butler has forgotten him. Yet has faith in God. Feels sure that the butler's dream, and his interpretation of it, shall somehow assist in his release. Perhaps does not think that his release and exaltation shall be coincident. He still performs his duty; and bides patiently for God's time.
- II. THE TROUBLED MONARCH. Even kings have their troubles. It is often true that uneasy lies the head that wears the crown. Joseph in prison, and Daniel in the lion's den, more to be envied than Pharaoh and Darius. Pharaoh's visions. Both different in machinery, but evidently the same in meaning. The great magicians, &c., summoned. Their wisdom is perfect folly. They knew not the mind of God. Could not explain visions that came from a Deity they did not serve. The butler at last remembers Joseph. The prisoner summoned to court. Makes himself fit to appear before the king. [As we should, to present ourselves before the great King. A bath (a fountain opened for sin and uncleanness), a robe (the robe of righteousness), prepared for us.] Joseph in the presence of Pharaoh. He recognizes God in that idolatrous court.
- III. THE EXALTED CAPTIVE. Joseph's advice sounds wise and prudent in the ears of Pharaoh. The king, whose word is law, declares Joseph his viceroy. Installs him in office as prince of Egypt. Puts the government in his hands. Even Pharaoh does homage to the true God in the person of Joseph (*v.* 38). [The advantage to a nation if God-fearing men are at the head of affairs. Who can estimate the advantage to this nation if every ruler were a man of God?] Joseph only 30 years of age, and yet so wise and so powerful. Power used for a nation's good. Consecration of knowledge and godliness to human service. The web of Providence further unravelled. The shepherd's dream about to be fulfilled in the prince of Egypt. Who can divert the mighty river of the Divine purposes? God's plans may seem to lie in abeyance, but are not therefore abandoned. Nature rests in winter only to clothe the world with the fruitfulness and beauty of spring.

LEARN—

- I. To remember those who have benefited us.
- II. Jesus the great deliverer of the prisoner.
- III. Let us prepare to enter the presence of the great King.
- IV. There is a palace in heaven for all who love, serve, and trust God.

B.C. 1707. Gen. xlii. 1—24.

- 1 *Now when.* Joseph having been sold as a slave 21 years before, and now fully 38 years of age (xli. 46). . . . *saw*, heard (xli. 57; Ac. vii. 12). . . . *look one . another ?* They looked on each others' wan and mute faces in sad
- 2 perplexity and with mutual forebodings. . . . *down thither*, a long journey, but "necessity has no law." . . . *live* (xliii. 8; Ps. cxviii. 17; Is. xxxviii. 3 1). . . . *ten*, the same 10 who had sold him fully 21 years before. . . .
- 4 *Benjamin*, Joseph's own bro. by the same mother, who had taken his place in his father's heart, and was now 22 years old. . . . *Lest*. Jacob would not, if possible, lose his Benjamin (v. 38). . . . *of Israel*, the prevailer. . . . *among those* (xli. 57). . . . *land . Canaan*, so far did the scarcity spread
- 6 (Ac. vii. 11). . . . *governor*, or viceroy (xli. 41). . . . *sold* (xli. 56). The government had bought it up, and now sold it. . . . *bowed*, fulfilling his
- 7 first dream (xxxvii. 7). . . . *saw*, had been expecting to see. . . . *knew*. They knew him not (v. 8). . . . *strange*, in manner, voice, appearance. . . . *roughly . them*. Heb. hard things to them. . . . *he said*, as if suspicious of their character. . . . *Whence*, how well he knew. . . . *Canaan*, his own
- 8 *land*. . . . *Joseph knew*: this fact repeated, to present it to us the more
- 9 vividly. Imagine that strange meeting. . . . *remembered*, which their humiliation and his present exaltation would vividly bring to mind. . . . *spies*. This he said that in their vindication they might disclose their past history. . . . *nakedness* = barrenness. Without the usual natural covering
- 10 of verdure, &c. . . . *buy food*, simply and solely for this. . . . *servants*, and he their brother. . . . *true men*, men speaking truth, of honest and
- 12 simple intentions. . . . *Nay*: he knew they spoke the truth, but would
- 13 elicit more. . . . *said*, more circumstantially detailing their life-history. . . . *youngest*, Benjamin. . . . *one*, Joseph. They little thought he was the great lord before whom they had bowed so humbly. . . . *is not* (xxxvii. 10;
- 14, 15 Lam. v. 7; xli. 20). . . . *That is it*, this I still affirm. . . . *Hereby*, by this test and according to your own saying. . . . *life . Pharaoh*. Had he used other than the Egyptian form of asseveration, they might have suspected him (1 Sam. i. 26; xvii. 55). . . . *Send one*. He afterwards
- 16 relented, and *kept one* (v. 19)—Simeon (v. 24). . . . *kept*. Heb. bound. . . .
- 17, 18 *three days*, for them to decide which should go. . . . *I fear God*, whom, in their former cruelty to him, they had forgotten (Lev. xxv. 43; Neh. v. 15). . . . *go ye*. He perhaps reflected, that, if only one were sent, he
- 20 could not carry corn enough. . . . *bring*. The famine, he knew, would
- 21 compel them to return. . . . *did so*: they consented. . . . *said*, in Joseph's presence. . . . *We . guilty*: their consciences now accuse them. . . . *we saw*. Memory came to the aid of conscience, and brought the past vividly before them (Job xxxvi. 8, 9; Hos. v. 15). . . . *therefore*. They regarded
- 22 it as a retribution (Pr. xxi. 13; Matt. vii. 2). . . . *Reuben* recalls with self-satisfaction the part he took, xxxvii. 21. . . . *blood . required* (ix. 5; 1 Ki. ii. 32; 2 Ch. xxiv. 22; Ps. ix. 12; Lu. xi. 50, 51). . . . *understood them*, in these altercations. . . . *interpreter*, one who knew the Hebrew and
- 24 Egyptian languages. . . . *from them*, went out of the room. . . . *wept*, for joy that all were penitent, and there was one who had tried to rescue him; and because they were now all so distressed. . . . *communed*, concerning who should be the hostage. . . . *Simeon*, whom Joseph himself appears to have selected. Perhaps because he played a conspicuous part in the old transaction (see his character, less. 31), or because he seemed less penitent than the rest.

Famine—Plenty—Buying Food.

- I. FAMINE. (1.) *A dire calamity*. Perhaps none greater. One which human wisdom cannot foresee. Affects all classes. Animal life depends on vegetable life, vegetable life on seasons, light, heat, rain, temperature, &c. These under the control of God. The lawmaker may suspend the operation of natural laws, moderate their influence, or affect their course. (2.) *Usually unexpected*. In this case there was a warning given, and preparations made. Men cannot foresee the suspension or deviation of natural laws. Hopes for the future built on productiveness of the past. (3.) *Often overruled for good*. In this case conspicuously so. Promotes human sympathy (thus the Irish famine, 1846-7, besides evoking much individual benevolence, was responded to by parliamentary grants of, in the whole, £10,000,000. *III.* Indian famine, 1861). Provokes scientific inquiry into "supply and demand" of food. Leads to emigration and breaking up of new ground. (4.) *Always possible and near*. World at any time only a harvest off starvation. (5.) *Generally local* (Gen. viii. 22). "All countries" (xli. 57), those adjacent to Egypt. Kindness of Providence in this. Nations in their turn dependent on each other. Each "offers something for the general use."
- II. PLENTY. (1.) *Where?* In Egypt. A storehouse of plenty for hungry nations. Always food in some place, and will be while the earth lasts. He who feeds the ravens knows what man has need of. (2.) *Why?* Does it seem strange that the promised land should suffer, rather than be the favoured spot? (a.) It was a small country. (b.) Had other nations gone thither they would have conquered it. (c.) Chiefly: it was part of the divine plan that Israel should go down into Egypt, and the famine necessitated this. (3.) *How?* By the extraordinary productiveness of seven preceding years, and the storing of the surplus corn. This effected by the instrumentality of Joseph. His mind supernaturally illuminated. Favour given him in the sight of the king of Egypt. His appointment to office, including the absolute control of the produce of the land.
- III. BUYING FOOD. (1.) Want in the house of Jacob. (2.) The ten sent out to buy corn in Egypt. (3.) They arrive in Egypt, and visit the royal granaries. (4.) Joseph recognizes them, and they bow before him, and thus fulfil the dream. (5.) To disarm suspicion, and to discover the temper of their minds, and the history of their family, they are charged with being spies, and cast into prison. (6.) After three days they are liberated, and a hostage required for their return with the younger brother of whom they have spoken, and of whose existence Joseph affects to doubt. (7.) Mutual recriminations respecting Joseph. (8.) Joseph is affected by what he hears. (9.) Simeon bound and left in prison, while they betake themselves away to Canaan.
- LEARN—However great the dearth of the bread that perisheth, there is always sufficient of the "bread of life," and it is always accessible.

B.C. 1707. Gen. xlii. 25—38.

- 25 *Then*, after these things (less. 36). . . . *Joseph*, full of pity and forgiveness, and with an object in view (for he knew they must return to bring the money; and he wished to secure their return). . . . *commanded*, privately. *fill . corn*, according to their request. . . . *every man's money*. Treats them with equal forgiveness. Not alone in the sack of Reuben, who had interceded for him, but Judah and the rest, who had been most cruel. Reuben reproved (v. 22), but Joseph pardoned. . . . *provision . way*, that they might not discover his bounty till near home (God gives us not only what we ask, but what we want) (Matt. v. 44; Rom. xii. 17, 20, 21). . . . *they*, Simeon excepted (v. 24). . . . *asses*, used as beasts of burden; horses for war, oxen for ploughing. . . . *corn*, in ignorance of the money. . . . *opened . sack* (xliii. 21), the provision being exhausted, or was food for the men only. . . . *espied* (from Fr. *espier*, of which *spy* is cor. form), discovered.
- 28 *heart failed* (marg. *went forth*), their feelings were disturbed. . . . *afraid*, this was a new wonder. . . . *God . done*. How soon conscience connected this with God. They could not suppose that men would return the money unless prompted by God. They were surrounded with mystery. . . . *came*, full of perplexity, without Simeon. . . . *told all . befell*, both things in Egypt and on the way. The binding of Simeon, and the finding of the money. A brother taken, money returned. They had sold Joseph for money; Joseph now, as it were, purchased Simeon. It may be to remind
- 30 them of their old act. . . . *The man*, their own brother. . . . *the lord*, to whom they had bowed down in fulfilment of the dream. . . . *roughly*. See marg. . . . *true men*, men who *are* and *say* true. Truly what we represent ourselves to be. Honest men. . . . *We be twelve*. There were twelve of us. . . . *one . not*, Joseph. They did not say what had happened to
- 33 him, but represented that he was dead. . . . *youngest*, Benjamin. . . . *the man, the lord*. They cannot mention the man without naming his title; so impressed were they with his power. . . . *then shall I know*. He knew who they were without this. What may have been his motive for bringing Benjamin down? Did he suspect that something had happened to him? Would he bring about the fulfilment of his dream more literally, and have *all* his brethren do him reverence? or was it simply an affectionate desire to see a brother who was the son of the same mother? or was it that he might find a better opportunity of testing the present character of his brothers and their feelings *now* towards their father and his
- 35 favourite son? . . . *traffick* (xxxiv. 10), trade. . . . *afraid*. As they thus discoursed they were emptying their sacks, and now a new wonder burst upon them. All their money returned. Would the lord of Egypt send
- 36 and charge them with theft? *against me*. Jacob is suspicious. He cannot account for that money. From the harsh way in which he speaks to his sons he evidently is suspicious of them. Probably thought they had come away without paying, or had sold their brother Simeon. . . . *Reuben*, the eldest, most amiable, and very likely the most trusted of them all.
- 38 *deliver him*, i.e. Benjamin. . . . *he said*. Jacob had been guilty in his time of dark deeds; and is naturally suspicious of others. As a son he had not been truthful, and now suspects his own sons. . . . *left alone*, of Rachel's children, and the last relic of my love for Rachel.

The Return—the Discovery—the Family Consternation.

- I. THE RETURN. Affairs in Egypt strangely settled, they set out on their return. They have been treated with a perplexing mixture of kindness and harshness. They have provision for their journey ; but they remember the prison, and the hostage they have left behind. What shall they say to their father? Once they returned without Joseph. He scarcely recovered from that blow. Now they are without Simeon, and must demand Benjamin. How great their perplexity! They thought of Joseph when in the presence of the Lord of Egypt: do they think of him now? By the very road they were travelling they saw him borne away years before. They were enveloped in mystery. The old man at home among his hungry household, and their own children awaiting their return. Simeon's children, too, to meet: and no father brought back to them.
- II. THE DISCOVERY. Thus perplexed, and anxiously anticipating the result, they arrive at one of the inns, or khans, at which the caravans stopped to rest. An ass needs provender. A sack is opened. The money is discovered. Consternation. What can it all mean? Did they reflect on the money for which they had once sold a brother? Probably Joseph's purchasers once lodged with their newly bought slave in that very inn, and talked of the sum they had given, as these men were now talking of the money they had found. This money boded no good. An unheard-of thing, that a seller should return the money. Joseph very likely returned the money to ensure their return; lest they might need food and not have money to buy it. A new thing to tell their father.
- III. THE FAMILY CONSTERNATION. They arrive at home. The first greetings over, inquiries are made. Where is Simeon? They relate the history of their adventures and Simeon's detention. While they relate this strange history they open their sacks. A new discovery. All the money returned! Fear seizes the whole family. It is a new thing in the story of trade. May have been regarded by them as a pretext for the Egyptians coming and carrying them all away into captivity. Jacob especially filled with dread. He has now lost two sons, and sees in the returned money a new occasion of alarm. "All these things are against me." But they were all for him, because a son was in it all. "All things shall work together for the good of them who love God," because another son—Jesus Christ—is concerned in our welfare.

LEARN—

- I. Past sins cast their shadow on the present, and overcast the future.
- II. The wicked fleeth when no man pursueth.
- III. Conscience converts things strange into things ominous.
- IV. Our ignorance of divine plans causes us to charge God foolishly.
- V. No money needed to procure the bread of life. "*In my hand no price I bring.*" Jesus Christ is an "unspeakable GIFT."

B.C. 1706. Gen. xliii. 1—25.

- 1,2 *sore* (A.S. *sár*), heavy, painful. . . *in . land*, in Canaan. . . *came . pass*, about a year after events recorded in the last chapter. . . *eaten . corn*, having used it sparingly. . . *father*. Jacob seeing starvation before them. . . *little food*. With a little food he had once bought his birthright.
- 3 Now the want of a little food embitters his life. . . *Judah*. Reuben is silent. He had already spoken (xlii. 37). Judah is a darker and sterner character. . . *solemnly protest*, Heb. protesting protested. . . *except . brother* (xlii. 20; xlii. 23). . . *If, &c.* Judah thus stipulates, knowing
- 5 the journey will be vain without Benjamin. . . *if . not*. Hard words for
- 6 a father and a hungry man to hear. . . *Israel*, the prevailer. The man who prevailed with God cannot prevail with men; and these men his own sons. . . *as to tell*. Here again Jacob, the supplanter, speaks. He would
- 7 have concealed the truth. . . *they said, &c.* From the history (xlii.) it does not appear that these questions were asked. Probably they were not.
- 8 *we told him*, unasked. . . *tenor*, Heb. mouth. . . *Judah*, seeing that his father hesitated. . . *live . die*, a conclusive appeal. They would certainly
- 9 die without food. . . *surety*. Legal security. We have a better Surety. *hand . him*. We are required at the hand of One who says, "Of those thou hast given me have I lost none." . . *if, &c.* (xlii. 32; Philem. 18,
- 10 19). . . *lingered*, we are losing time. . . *returned*, we should have been
- 11 back, with food, ere this. . . *Israel*, being prevailed over. . . *best fruits*, characteristic productions of Canaan, rarities in Egypt. . . *carry . present* (xxxii. 20; Prov. xviii. 16). . . *balm* (xxxvii. 25), whose medicinal virtues were in high repute. The gum of a shrub growing in Palestine and Gilead (*T. B. K.*; *balm*, *D. B. S.* i. 466—469). . . *myrrh*, a fragrant resin obtained from the Arabian *balsamodendron* (Jer. viii. 22). . . *nuts*, pistachio nuts (*botnim*, *D. B. S.* i. 484): much eaten where they grow.
- 12 Made into sweet cakes with honey and flour. . . *double money*, besides the
- 13 money returned. . . *oversight*, a mistake. . . *brother*, Benjamin. . .
- 14,15 *bereaved* (Esth. iv. 16). . . *rose up*, made formal preparation and set
- 16 out. . . *ruler*. Joseph had officers and a great household. . . *slay*,
- 17 Heb. kill a killing = make a great feast (1 Sam. xxv. 11). . . *man*, the
- 18 ruler, or chamberlain of the household. . . *house*, palace. . . *afraid*. "This conscience doth make cowards of us all." . . *seek occasion*, find a ground of offence: Heb. roll himself upon us (Job xxx. 14; Dan. vi.
- 19,20 4). . . *steward*, or chamberlain. . . *communed*, conversed. . . *said*,
- 21 beseechingly. . . *came . pass, &c.* They related circumstantially all that had happened. . . *inn*. Though it does not appear that more than one sack was then opened and the rest at home (com. xlii. 27 with 35). . .
- 22 *weight*. Money was weighed, and not counted, as with us (xxiii. 16). . .
- 23 *brought . again*, to return it, as not our own. . . *tell who*: they feared they might be charged with stealing it. . . *Peace*. Be not troubled. . .
- 24 *your God*. Jehovah, of whom the steward had heard prob. from Joseph. *hath given*, as he really had, in his providence. . . *I . money*. You did not steal it. I had it placed where you found it. . . *brought . out*, of prison. This would further re-assure them. . . *washed . feet*. Common custom. Refreshing after a long journey. They wore sandals (xviii. 4;
- 25 xxiv. 32). . . *asses*. Hospitable entertainment. . . *made ready*, placed out in order. . . *present*. The fruit of the old fatherland would be very pleasant to Joseph. Presents from home conjure up home memories. Jesse sent David with home gifts to his brethren (1 Sam. xvii. 17).

Jacob's Entreaty—Judah's Expostulation—the Brothers' Meeting.

I. JACOB'S ENTREATY. (1.) *The occasion of it.* Continuance of the famine. How dreary the prospect. Barren earth. Languishing cattle. Dry river-beds. The heavens as brass. (2.) *The character of it.* "Buy us a little food." (a.) "Buy." They had money. The money that was returned, and a little more. They probably took all they could well spare the first time, not thinking the famine would last so long, and intending to obtain enough to suffice till plenty was restored. (b.) "A little food." It was all they could purchase with what money was left after they had restored the first purchase-money. (c.) "Go again." He does not say a word about Benjamin. Did he think they had forgotten him; or that they would not press the matter? He speaks of food, not of Simeon or Benjamin.

II. JUDAH'S EXPOSTULATION. He at once assures his father that it is of no use except Benjamin goes too; and refuses to go without him, as a useless and perilous experiment. Jacob's fears are revived at once in behalf of Benjamin. Judah urges his suit, and pledges himself for the safe return of Benjamin. Suggests that if they do not go they will all die of hunger. Reminds his father that, but for his hesitation, they might have been there and back by the time they were then in consultation. Judah, if the darker character, was also the most resolute and impulsive man; hence his forwardness to speak and take the lead in this business. Jacob acquiesces. Makes up, of the little store of hungry people, a present. Little thinks how that present will remind the great lord of Egypt of his native land and home. Sends also double money, perhaps thinking that the price of corn may be raised. Possibly to assure the Egyptians that having money, they had no need to steal, should they be so charged.

III. THE BROTHERS' MEETING. They once more set out for Egypt. In due time they stand in the presence of the great lord. Joseph sees and recognizes Benjamin. Commands that a banquet shall be prepared in his own house. This new kindness filled them with new fear. They thought they were being ensnared, and would be sold as bondmen. Yet they had done to Joseph the very thing they feared to receive at his hands. Having had no opportunity of speaking to Joseph, they explain to the steward. He encourages them. Tells them not to fear. Reminds them of God's mercy. Joseph's present is therefore prepared, and they await the issue. In all this see how a guilty conscience destroys enjoyment of happy circumstances. If a man is right within, all will be right without; if he be wrong, all will be wrong.

LEARN—I. To be thankful for plenty. II. To pity the distressed.

III. Sin brings its own punishment.

IV. The brothers' meeting may remind us of our future meeting with our Elder Brother.

B.C. 1706. Gen. xliii. 26—34.

- 26 *came home*, from the audience chamber and affairs of state. . . . *bowed themselves*. Now with Benjamin, the dream (xxvii. 7) literally fulfilled.
- 27 *welfare*, Heb. peace, which included all welfare, within and without (xxxvii. 14). . . . *Is . father*. His father too, of whom the presents, as well as his natural affection, reminded him. . . . *old man*: of whom the picture would rise before the mind of Joseph. . . . *spake* (xlii. 11, 13). *alive*? He might be sure he was, since the second dream had not yet been fulfilled. Indeed, the question—see *marg.*—concerned his prosperity
- 28 and health more than life. . . . *Thy servant*. How strangely must this epithet, as applied to his father, have sounded in the ear of Joseph! . . . *bowed*. This not a mere inclination of the head, but a prostration of the whole body on the ground. . . . *obeisance*. Sign of lowly subjection. . . .
- 29 *lifted . eyes*, looked narrowly. . . . *mother's son* (xxxv. 17, 18), Rachel's.
- 30 With probably a resemblance to his mother. . . . *made haste*: was hurried, agitated. . . . *bowels* (1 Ki. iii. 26), compassion. "The bowels were supposed by the old anatomists to be the seat of the affections. The usage was transferred to our language from the translations of the Bible" (*Bible Word Book*). (Phil. i. 8; ii. 1; Ps. xxii. 14; Jer. iv. 19; 2 Cor. vi. 12; Col. iii. 12; 1 Jo. iii. 7). . . . *yearn*, to stir with emotion (A.S. *ginnan*, lit. to long for, desire eagerly). . . . *sought . weep*, considered where he might go and weep tears of joy, and gratitude to God. . . . *chamber*, private room. Bed-room. . . . *wept there* (xlii. 24), in secret.
- 31 *washed . face*, to remove all trace of weeping. The time had not yet come when he would reveal himself to his brothers. . . . *went out*, to his brethren once more. . . . *refrained*, kept down his emotions. . . . *set . bread*, let the dinner be served. Bread is often put for all food (iii. 19; xxxix. 6; Mat. vi. 11). . . . *they*, the attendants, having been instructed what to do. . . . *by himself*, at a separate table. . . . *by themselves*, at another table. . . . *Egyptians*, officers of his household. . . . *abomination* (xlvi. 24; Ex. viii. 26). "Probably from the detestation in which, from the oppressions of the shepherd kings, the nation held all of that occupation" (*Jamieson*). "The Hebrews and others, for example, slaughtered and ate animals, even female animals, which were regarded by the Egyptians as sacred; so that, according to Herodotus (ii. 41), no Egyptian would use the knife, or fork, or saucepan of a Greek, nor would any eat of the flesh of a clean animal which had been cut up with a Grecian knife" (*Delitzsch*). . . . *before*, in the presence of, or in front of. . . . *according . birthright*. The places were arranged according to their ages. This was done by command of Joseph. . . . *men*, Joseph's brethren. . . . *marvelled*, wondering how the Lord of Egypt should know their order of seniority. To them he would
- 33 seem possessed of supernatural wisdom. . . . *he . messes*. To do them honour. The other Egyptians would hardly have done this. . . . *Benjamin's*, as the most distinguished guest, had the largest and best (1 Sam. ix. 23, 24). Most nations gave double (as Spartans), or fourfold (Cretans). Number 5 seems to have been preferred by the Egyptians (xli. 34; xlv. 22; xlvii. 2, 24; Isa. xix. 18). This treatment of Benjamin may have been to see if his brethren would still envy a favourite. It may have been love to his own mother's son. It may also have been to indicate one who had no part in the affair against himself. . . . *were merry* (Hag. i. 6; Jo. ii. 10). This simply means that they were satisfied with what they had.
- Jamieson's East. Cust., Old Test.*, 159. *K. D. B. I.* i. 411, 417.

Presents from Home—Inquiries about Home—the Banquet.

- I. PRESENTS FROM HOME. Those made to Joseph, by men who little thought what feelings they might excite. (1.) They were from his father. He would think of them as being selected by him. An act of homage. (2.) They were peculiar to his native country and immediate neighbourhood. How often when a boy had he collected similar gums and nuts. They would take him back to the old time. (3.) The presents we may receive from home have more of love in them than homage. We like them the better for that. (4.) These presents were the gifts of poor men, who were the poorer by reason of the famine. Presents not to be valued by their intrinsic worth, but by the circumstances under which they were selected, and the feelings with which they are offered. (5.) Every good gift is from above. God the author and giver of every good and perfect gift. (6.) There is one unspeakable gift, made to us, suited to us; have we accepted this gift?
- II. INQUIRIES ABOUT HOME. (1.) They are asked concerning their welfare (see Exod. xviii. 7). Such inquiries from us often mean only the welfare of the body, or relate to temporal things. Family greetings pleasant. Should include an interest in highest and best things. (2.) They soon regarded the absent. His father in particular, the "old man." It was about 22 years since he had seen his father. "Is he yet alive?" A few years work great changes in families. Return to your native town after an absence of 22 years, and note the different names, and the vast changes. The father was poorer than when he saw him last, by reason of the famine; the son was richer than when he left home to look after the shepherds in Shechem. The coat of many colours exchanged for a robe of state. The shepherd boy become a prince. Absent friends to be remembered. (3.) Benjamin specially addressed.
- III. THE BANQUET. (1.) *The president of the feast.* Joseph. At a raised table by himself. His state and grandeur. Perhaps the presents from home were placed before him. His knowledge of the guests, and their ignorance of him (*ill.* Jesus at the last supper knew all, and was little known; *ill.* after the resurrection he was known in the breaking of bread). (2.) *The officers of his household.* They would show the respect and honour in which he was held. (3.) *The Israelites.* The arrangement of their places at the table. "Whence hath this man this knowledge?" Benjamin's mess. What could this mean? Whether they liked it or not. Their father's regard for the younger son, whether Joseph or Benjamin, was to be respected. They needed to be taught this lesson. And we must honour our parents. As they thus sat and feasted with the prince, did they think of the time when they sat down to eat bread by the side of the pit where Joseph was once imprisoned? Joseph returned good for evil.

LEARN—Let us remember home, especially the heavenly home.

B.C. 1706. Gen. xliv. 1—17.

- 1 *commanded*, privately. . . . *the steward*, Heb. him that was over his house. *food*, corn. . . . *can carry*, as much as they will hold. . . . *every man's*
- 2 *money*, as on the former occasion. . . . *my cup*, the silver cup. Simply a valuable possession of Joseph. "The Egyptians practised the plate and water incantations, which consisted in pouring clean water into a goblet, and then looking into the water for representations of future events." Certainly Joseph did not adopt this superstitious art. . . . *youngest*. Benjamin, to bring him into difficulty; to see how far the brotherly feelings of the rest would be roused to sympathize with his distress, and stimulate
- 3 their exertions to procure his deliverance. . . . *morning . light*. Journeys in the East are undertaken in the cool of the day. Early morning and
- 4 evening. Resting in the heat. . . . *out . city*, fairly on their journey. Rejoicing at the issue of their visit. . . . *follow after*: the special messenger would prove the anger of the great lord. . . . *say*, &c.: it was to be assumed that they would know the crime of which they were charged.
- 5 *divineth*, maketh trial. The Egyptian steward naturally thought that this
- 6 was the use of the cup. . . . *same words*: rejoicing, as they may have been, at their good treatment, this intelligence must have overwhelmed
- 7 them. . . . *Wherefore*. Since the thing is not true, what can be the reason
- 8 of the charge? . . . *brought again*, and therefore proved the honesty of our intentions. . . . *land . Canaan*: brought it all that distance, rather than
- 9 keep it. . . . *whomsoever*. They were fully persuaded that the charge was a mistake. . . . *die*: they little thought with whom it would be found.
- 10 *bondmen*. So none would return to comfort the father. . . . *he said*, i. e.
- 11 the steward. . . . *blameless*. I will take only the one who has it. . . . *speedily*, both because they were convinced of their innocence, and because
- 12 they would get on their way. . . . *he searched*, the steward. . . . *began at the eldest*. How their hopes would rise as he proceeded from sack to sack and found it not! . . . *Benjamin's sack*. Their horror and dismay.
- 13 Benjamin's astonishment. . . . *rent . clothes*, Oriental sign of intense grief (xxvii. 29, 34; Num. xiv. 6; 2 Sam. i. 10). . . . *laded . ass*, dejected and sad. Convinced of their innocence, yet with this proof of guilt that they could not explain. All the kindness they had received would now appear to be part of a treacherous plot to throw them off their guard. . . . *returned*.
- 14 Yet there was no need, except in the case of Benjamin (*v.* 10). . . . *fell . ground*, made obeisance. Now in most abject fear. Would think the lord's anger would be great in proportion to his previous kind treatment.
- 15 *Joseph*, with assumed sternness. . . . *wot*, know. . . . *divine*, discover secrets. How could ye think to escape? . . . *Judah*, confounded, overwhelmed, hardly knowing what to answer. It is to be noticed that Reuben
- 16 is silent, though the eldest. . . . *What*, &c.? We can say nothing, since the cup declares against us. . . . *found . iniquity*. Did he refer to this event alone, or was he thinking of a past sin, on account of which this evil had come upon them? . . . *we*, &c. We are in thy hands, and can say
- 17 nothing. . . . *he said*, Joseph (Prov. xvii. 15). His mercy sounds awful to them. It involved Benjamin's retention. Joseph is now testing their regard for his younger brother. The rest may go, but Benjamin shall remain. The very thing they most desired to avoid.

 Private Command—Obnoxious Charge—Appalling Discovery.

- I. THE PRIVATE COMMAND. (1.) Its *nature*. All the money to be returned, and his silver cup to be placed in the sack belonging to Benjamin. It may seem strange that the steward was to charge them with stealing a cup wherein Joseph divined (if indeed the cup was *not* used for that purpose, as we believe); knowing that Joseph was a servant of God. We may not, with the higher standard of morality of these Christian times, approve this pretence; but it is in keeping with the whole transaction, which is a feint throughout. (2.) *Motive*. Doubtless to test the feeling of the rest towards Benjamin. Did they envy this favourite, as they did the *other*? If so, it was very likely that on being overtaken they would abandon the man with whom the cup was found—Benjamin—to his fate. Make no effort to procure his release. Return home without *him*, as they had once gone without Joseph. Before he proceeded further in helping his family in the famine, he would see if they had improved morally all these years.
- II. THE ORNOXIOUS CHARGE. The confidential servant having received the command, but most likely being ignorant of all his master's plans and of the relation of these guests, proceeded to put it in execution. (1.) The brethren set off. Their journey. How unlike the last, when they were full of perplexity, and had left Simeon behind. Now they talk of their good treatment, and are accompanied by Simeon, and that Benjamin whom they had feared to lose. (2.) They are pursued. Their astonishment at seeing the steward, who (xlili. 23) had not long before spoken assuring words, hastening after them. (3.) The charge. The steward faithfully, but to their great amazement, repeats the command of his master. (4.) Their indignant denial. Such conduct would be opposed to the will of God (v. 7). The idea was inconsistent with their proved honesty (v. 8). They are quite willing to abide by the results of search. And that the punishment should be greater than hinted.
- III. THE APPALLING DISCOVERY. (1.) The search commences. They are willing. The steward begins as far as possible from where he knows it is concealed. Thus they do not suspect him of any complicity, and their confidence increases as he proceeds. (2.) They see Benjamin's sack opened, and there, shining in all its beauty, is the cup! What could they think, or say, or do? They did not suffer Benjamin to return alone. The test was successful. There was another discovery—an altered feeling towards the old man and his favourite son. This discovery Joseph made. (3.) They could only regard it as a plot of some one—perhaps the lord of Egypt—to find a pretext for keeping them in bondage. What would become now of their father, and their wives and little ones?

LEARN—

- I. That our religion admits not of pretences.
- II. The time of confidence may be the hour of peril.

B.C. 1706. Gen. xlv. 18—34.

- 18 *Judah*. The very brother who was most implicated in Joseph's ill-treatment now becomes chief intercessor for Benjamin. How this must have pleased Joseph. . . . *came near*, in his importunity, stepping in advance of the rest. . . . *said*, at first a few broken utterances, then a torrent of earnest supplication. . . . *anger . servant*. Such was the power and pride of Oriental despots, that even to attempt a defence was known to be dangerous. . . . *Pharaoh* (xviii. 30, 32; Ex. xxxii. 22): our life is in thy hands. Thy word is law. What I say shall be humbly said, and truth-
- 19 fully. . . . *asked*: he first reminds Joseph of this conversation, to show how subsequent events agreed therewith, to show that so far they were proved
- 20 to be true men. . . . *we said*. He continues to relate the previous conversation. Can anything be more beautifully pathetic than this verse? "I would give very much," says Luther, "to be able to pray to our Lord God as well as Judah prays to Joseph here; for it is a perfect specimen of
- 21 prayer, the true feeling that there ought to be in prayer." . . . *thou saidst* (xlii. 15, 20). Judah skilfully avoids naming the charge of being spies, which the bringing down of Benjamin was to refute. . . . *set . eyes*, with a good intention. To show good will (Jer. xxxix. 12; xl. 4; Isa. lxvi. 2).
- 22 *we said*. We showed how difficult this thing was, on account of our
- 23 father's affection for the lad. . . . *thou saidst*. Thou wast inexorable. . . .
- 24 *see . face*, as needy men wanting food. . . . *came . pass*. How interesting must this prayer now have been to Joseph, as it related what took place in
- 25 his father's home in Canaan. . . . *told him*, literally, and truly. . . . *father said*. When the corn was all gone, and hunger stared us in the face. . . .
- 26 *little food*, for we had none at all. . . . *we said*. We told our father that the journey would be useless unless Benjamin went. Perhaps worse than
- 27 useless, since we might be judged guilty of being spies. . . . *my wife*. Rachel was regarded by Jacob as his true wife (xlv. 19). . . . *two sons*,
- 28 Joseph and Benjamin. . . . *the one*, Joseph. . . . *went out* (xxxvii. 12—14). *torn in pieces* (xxxvii. 33). Judah relates what he said to his father, not
- 29 what had really happened. . . . *And if, &c.* (xlii. 36, 38). This is what my father said when at length he suffered Benjamin—in whose sack the
- 30 cup has been strangely found—to accompany us hither. . . . *now therefore*, that this has occurred, if Benjamin be detained a prisoner. . . . *life . lad's life* (1 Sam. xviii. 1). Soul bound to his soul = he clings to him with all
- 31 his soul. . . . *he . die*. As he was like to have done when he lost Joseph; and this we would avert. . . . *gray hairs, &c.*, as our father said. Joseph must have been pleased to see how considerate of his father Judah must
- 32 have grown. . . . *became surety*. So Joseph learns that Judah, who had so ill-treated him, had become a pledge for his brother Benjamin. . . .
- 33 *Now therefore*. Thus he closes this extraordinary and effective intercession. . . . *let . servant*, i.e. let me, Judah. . . . *a bondman*. I will be a slave, if you will let Benjamin be free. So Jesus took our place, that we might have freedom from the dominion and consequences of sin (Ex. xxxii.
- 34 32). . . . *I see . evil*. He could not endure seeing a repetition of the old sorrow, and perchance still worse consequences (Ex. xviii. 8; Job xxxi. 29; Ps. cxvi. 3; cxix. 143).

He Rehearses the Past—Pictures the Future—Proposes a Compromise.

- I. HE REHEARSES THE PAST (*vv.* 18—29). (1.) The *speaker*. Judah. Well that it was he. Had it been Reuben the proof of penitence had not been so clear. It had been too much like the old Reuben (*com.* xxxvii. 22 with xlii. 22). It was Judah, and not like the old Judah (*xxxvii.* 26, 27). The last time Joseph heard Judah speak of his father's favourite was when he (Joseph) was in the pit, and Judah, on the edge, was proposing to sell him into bondage. Now he intercedes to save Benjamin from bondage. (2.) The *subject*. He (1.) recalls the former visit, and the conversation of that time (*vv.* 18—20). He then (2.) proceeds to remind Joseph of his command (*v.* 21), but for which they had not brought their brother. Of their expostulations (*v.* 22) and of his firmness of purpose (*v.* 23). He then drew the portrait of the old man, described the long time they bore the pangs of hunger before Jacob at last would suffer Benjamin to go; and, having hinted at the loss of one other son, repeated the final words of the old man (*v.* 29).
- II. HE PICTURES THE FUTURE. This he was the better able to do, from his memory of a former occasion. That picture of sorrow and wail of agony had ever since haunted him. It might be repeated with still more painful consequences. It might hasten the death of his father. He records, without a censure, the endearing union of the old father and his younger brother. There was one life between them. The death or loss of Benjamin might be the death of the father. He relates that he had become a surety for the safe return of the lad. As he thus earnestly and most pathetically pleads for the release of Benjamin, what feelings must have risen in the mind of Joseph. Chiefly of joy that Judah was so changed; but also of attachment to a father who had mourned his own supposed death so long and truly.
- III. HE PROPOSES A COMPROMISE. (1.) Its *nature*. If one must be held in bondage for this supposed crime, let it be himself, who is confessedly innocent; in place of Benjamin, whose guilt is assumed. Judah has wife and children at home, yet will leave all rather than abandon his brother. He will be henceforth a slave, if only Benjamin may be free. Was ever love like this? "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (*Jo.* xv. 13; see especially *Rom.* v. 6—8). (2.) The *motive*. To spare his father all needless pain. He would accept the position of being less loved than Benjamin. His father might grieve at his loss, as he had at Simeon's, but the loss of Benjamin would affect him more. (3.) The *result*. The test had proved to Joseph that Judah repented the past. It was a happy discovery. What can give greater joy to a brother than to see a right moral change in a brother?
- LEARN—I. Fearlessly to take the side of the innocent and the aged.
 II. To bring forth fruit meet for repentance.
 III. Not to be ashamed of an honourable change of heart and mind.
 IV. To love and honour him who became a surety for us.

B.C. 1706. Gen. xlv. 1—28.

- 1 *Then Joseph*, deeply affected by the sincerity of Judah, and by the picture of his father's grief. . . . *refrain*, withhold his emotions. . . . *cried*, commanded. . . . *every man*, every Egyptian. They must have wondered at the command of their lord to be left alone with these strange men, and his brethren also must have marvelled. . . . *made known*: the time having at last come, now that he sees his brethren penitent. God makes *himself* known to the penitent (Isa. lxvi. 2). . . . *wept aloud*, Heb. gave forth his voice in weeping. . . . *heard*, so loud was the joyful weeping of their great viceroy. What astonishment must have filled the minds of his brethren!
- 3 *said*, in their own language. He had hitherto used an interpreter. . . . *I. Joseph* (Ac. vii. 13). Words which filled them with dismay. What might they expect from one who had been treated so ill? . . . *my father*, whose favourite he had been. . . . *not answer*, speechless with shame and fear. . . . *troubled*, not knowing what to expect. It might seem to them that the affair of the cup was arranged to throw them into his power, and
- 4 bring punishment upon them. . . . *Come near* = fear not. . . . *I. Joseph*, your brother. Not the lord of Egypt to you. . . . *angry yourselves*. The day was past in which they were angry with him. Sin brings self-condemnation (1 Jo. iii. 20; 2 Cor. vii. 11). . . . *for God*. He thus magnanimously overlooks their fault, in that God had brought good out of evil (1. 20; Ps. cv. 16, 17; 2 Sam. xvi. 10, 11; Ac. iv. 27, 28). . . . *life*, in Egypt and Canaan. . . . *two years*. The famine not half over. . . .
- 7 *great deliverance*. Jesus was sent, as the bread of life, to effect a greater. . . . *father*, for as a father provides for his family, so have I for
- 9 Pharaoh (xli. 43; Jud. xvii. 10; Job xxix. 16). . . . *Haste ye*, homeward. *come down*. Having Egypt to govern, he could not go down to Canaan.
- 10 Besides, he would have his father share the plenty of Egypt. . . . *Goshen* = frontier (?), district of Egypt assigned as residence of Jacob and family —fertile (xlvi. 6—11); good pasture (xlvi. 34; xlvii. 4); near the river (Nu. xi. 5); near to Joseph (xlvi. 1, 2; Ex. v. 20); N.E. of metropolis (xlvi. 29); called land of Rameses (xlvi. 11; Ex. xii. 37). . . . *nourish*, sustain, feed. . . . *your eyes*. You are witnesses, and now recognize me.
- 13, 14 *tell father*. Joseph knew how it would please him. . . . *Benjamin*, whom he loved specially as his father's favourite, and for his mother's
- 15, 16 sake. . . . *kissed all*, and forgave all (Lu. xv. 20). . . . *fame*, report, history. . . . *pleased*, for Joseph's sake. God pleased with us for Jesus' sake. . . . *This do ye*. Pharaoh confirms and enlarges the invitation. . . .
- 18, 19 *fat land*, the best it contains (Nu. xviii. 12, 29). . . . *wagons*. So considerate was he. Jacob in a land of poverty might not have the means
- 20, 21 of conveyance. . . . *regard not*, do not spare anything. . . . *to commandment*, Joseph joyfully obeyed. . . . *raiment*, a customary royal present.
- 23 *Benjamin*, for the father's and mother's sake. . . . *father*, as a pledge of
- 24 his love, and proof of his wealth. . . . *fall out*, quarrel. Needful advice to men who had been stirred to envy one brother, and now saw Benjamin
- 25 so enriched. . . . *out Egypt*, with great joy and laden with presents. . . . *unto Jacob*, who must have been surprised at their great equipage. . . .
- 26 *told him*, the strange news. . . . *believed not*, too good news to be true.
- 27, 28 *when saw*. The waggon, &c., convinced him. . . . *enough*. You need say no more. I believe it.

Burder's Orient. Cust. 91, 170. *Jamieson's East. Man.* 162. *T. L. B.* 20. *S. J. C. i.* 73, 83. *S. S. P.* xxxi. xxxvii. *Art.* "Goshen" in *T. B. K.*

A Brother's Pardon—a King's Gratitude—a Father's Joy.

- I. A BROTHER'S PARDON. Joseph's. (1.) *Of a great injury.* (a.) To Joseph. Rehearse the story in brief. A younger brother sold into captivity; and even that as a merciful deliverance from the death that was first intended. (b.) To Jacob. The beloved and trusted son taken from him. His heart well nigh broken by the story that was told him. (2.) *Of brothers.* The crime therefore greater. More easy to forgive the offence of a stranger than of a friend (Ps. xli. 9; Ps. lv. 12, 13, 20). (3.) *The pardon magnanimously bestowed.* Proved by deeds as well as words. Their sin extenuated. He dwells on the good that came out of it, not on the evil that was in it. Tried to soften down their harsh self-censure. The method of professing pardon may detract from its value, and suggest a doubt of its sincerity. (4.) *Marked by deep affection.* He could not repress his emotions, nor conceal his joy. Wept aloud. Kissed all his brethren. Judah, the darkest character, not excepted. (5.) *Practically demonstrated.* He will henceforth care for them during the famine. They who so little cared for their father's favourite child shall have their children cared for.
- II. A KING'S GRATITUDE. Pharaoh's. (1.) It had been already proved. He had exalted Joseph. Had accumulated honours, power, office, and title, upon him. (2.) He now cares for Joseph's friends. Royally lays himself out for their present and future good. Strange contrast to the conduct of many kings towards their deliverers and helpers (*ill.* Charles I. and Earl Stafford; Charles II., and his treatment of the faithful adherents of his house in its misfortunes; *com.* also David and Barzillai). (3.) It was bountifully expressed. Will have all Joseph's family invited to Egypt. Promises that they shall have "the fat of the land." Sends with the invitation the means of conveyance. Waggons, &c. Enjoins the free use of means and subsistence. "Regard not your stuff," &c. (v. 20).
- III. A FATHER'S JOY. Jacob's. (1.) Imagine Jacob's home. The old man of 130 years, feeble, doubtful, fearful, apprehensive. Waiting for the return of his sons. Anxious concerning Benjamin. (2.) Picture the arrival at home. They are all there. Benjamin amongst them. Simeon also. Joyful greeting. (3.) They tell their story. Good news. Joseph yet alive! governor of Egypt. (4.) Jacob doubts. He is suspicious of his sons. (5.) The arrival of the waggons convinces him. His spirit revives. His great joy. New hopes. He will see Joseph again, and in such a robe of office as his affection could not have provided. What greater joy can a father know than that excited by good news of absent children. Those who leave home with good principles the most likely to create such joy. Religion supplies the only true basis of character. The Lord was with Joseph. He will be with us in our wanderings if we begin them with him.
- LEARN—Let love be without dissimulation. Forgive injuries and prove the reality of forgiveness.

B.C. 1706. Gen. xlv. 1—7; 28—34.

- 1 *Israel*, having conquered his grief, and being now 130 years old. . . . *came*, travelling southwards from Hebron. . . . *Beer-sheba* = the well of the oath, S. of Palestine (xxi. 14, 22—34; xxviii. 10). . . . *sacrifices*, of joy and thanksgiving.
 - 2 *God spake*, the sacrifices being offered, and accepted. . . . *visions* (xv. 1; Job xxxiii. 14, 15). . . . *Jacob*. Calling him by his old name, to remind him of what he had been. . . . *here . I.* Ready to hearken and obey.
 - 3 *I . God.* Do not forget me in the land of false gods. . . . *fear not*. Whence it would appear that although cordially invited by man, he was not assured that this journey might be pleasing to God. . . . *great nation*. Promise repeated (xii. 2; Deut. xxvi. 5).
 - 4 *I go . thee.* My presence shall be thy protection (xxviii. 15; xlviii. 21). *bring . again.* Jacob died in Egypt (xlvii. 27, 31; xlix. 33), but was buried in Canaan (l. 1—13); fulfilled in his descendants. . . . *hand . eyes*, to close them in death (l. 1).
 - 5 *carried*, conveyed, took care of on the way (Ac. vii. 15). . . . *wagons* (xlv. 19, 21).
 - 6 *cattle*, flocks, herds, sheep, goats, oxen, asses, camels. . . . *Jacob . seed* (Deut. xxvi. 5; Josh. xxiv. 4; Ps. cv. 23; Isa. lii. 4). (See the list classified and examined in *Kiel and Delitzsch on the Pentateuch*, i. 369.)
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- 28 *he*, Jacob. . . . *Judah*, selected prob. as having been the chief spokesman before. . . . *direct . face.* To let him know that they were coming, and the route.
 - 29 *Joseph*, rejoiced to hear the news. . . . *chariot*, the second royal chariot. He goes out as a prince to meet and welcome his father. . . . *fell . neck.* Filial love. Pious gratitude. Intense joy. . . . *good while*, so deep and lasting the joy on both sides.
 - 30 *now . die* (Lu. ii. 29, 30). Nothing better than this to live for. My greatest wish is realized.
 - 31 *Joseph said.* He must leave them awhile to prepare their reception (Jo. xiv. 1—3). . . . *Pharaoh*, a good master, who will share in his servants' joy.
 - 32 *shepherds*, an abomination to the Egyptians, who had suffered much from the rule of the shepherd kings. Joseph will therefore smooth the way for this new colony of shepherds. . . . *trade*, avocation, manner of life. . . . *feed cattle*, husbandmen.
 - 33 *Pharaoh call.* He thus prepares them for a royal interview. . . . *occupation.* Joseph knew that this would be the first inquiry.
 - 34 *ye . say.* But for this advice of Joseph, they, knowing the national dislike of shepherds, might have prevaricated, or hesitated. . . . *youth . fathers.* Our family and national calling (xxx. 35; xxxiv. 5; xxxvii. 12). . . . *dwell . Goshen.* A land suited for their purpose, and sufficiently removed from the more crowded and mercantile part of the community. . . . *abomination.* Hence they lived apart from the Egyptians, and thus was preserved to them freedom in their religious usages; compactness in their habitation,—all lived together; and when the time came for their return to the land of promise, they were on the "frontier" nearest to Palestine. Note the hand of Providence in all this.

Divine promise—father's messenger—happy meeting—honest counsellor.

- I. A DIVINE PROMISE. (1.) *The occasion on which it was given.* Jacob having heard that Joseph was alive, was anxious to see his son once more. Felt he could hardly leave the promised land except he had divine permission. He went as far as he dared,—to Beer-sheba, in the extreme south, and there offered sacrifice unto the God of his father. Then it was, in a vision, that the promise was spoken. Divine mercy and condescension, responding to the father's desire. "Like as a father pitieth his children," &c. (2.) *The nature of it.* (a.) Confirmation of old promise (v. 3). Jacob had not forgotten it. But might not going down to Egypt prevent its fulfilment? (b.) Promise of Divine presence and protection. "I will go," &c. (v. 4). (c.) Promise that the father shall see his long-lost son. (3.) *Practical effect of it.* In the strength of the encouragement it imparted Jacob, 130 years old, sets out for Egypt.
- II. A FATHER'S MESSENGER. Judah. He had taken a chief part in the separating of father and son, and we now see him most active in bringing about the meeting. Those who have done wrong may not be able to undo the wrong they have done, but should, if possible, make reparation. Recall the activity of Judah all through the history. His intercession for Benjamin, &c. There seems to have been a radical change in him.
- III. A HAPPY MEETING. Jacob and Joseph. Some 22 years had passed since they had seen each other. Then, Joseph at 17 years of age, went forth a servant to obey his father; now, at 39 years of age, his father finds him the chief prince of state in the most powerful nation on the face of the earth, and regarded by all class as a great public benefactor. It was no prodigal's return. Jacob would have been glad to see Joseph under any circumstances, but how great his pride at finding him thus exalted. Jacob, as a God-fearing man, had no need to be ashamed of the progress of his son.
- IV. AN HONEST COUNSELLOR. Joseph to his brethren. They were not to disguise their calling; although the Egyptians abominated it. They were to begin in their new home on right principles, were to be true and honest. How many resort to unmanly concealments of humble extraction and lowly avocations when away from home. Honesty always right, and therefore the best policy. In this case the effect is evident. The Israelites were located by themselves. Their exodus the more easy and practicable when the time came. Had they been spread through the country, their collection and departure had been most difficult.
- LEARN—I. To seek God's guidance in all our movements.
 II. To look for the fulfilment of promise, in an honest obedience.
 III. Endeavour to repair results of past sins. Restitution and reparation.
 IV. Let conduct in absence of parents be such as to render the meeting happy.
 V. Begin life on right principles. Honour, truth, honesty.

B.C. 1706. Gen. xlvii. 1—10.

- 1 *Then*. Having given these instructions to his father and brethren. . . . *Joseph* (xlv. 31), as he had said. . . . *told Pharaoh*. His king, and benefactor. . . . *My father and . brethren*. Of whom Pharaoh had heard before. . . . *Goshen*. To which district he, as Viceroy, had allotted them
- 2 (xlv. 10; xlv. 28). . . . *some*, leaving the rest to superintend the Israelitish homestead and property. . . . *five* : why this number, and which of the brethren, we know not ; perhaps the eldest (but see note on xliii. 34, less. 39). . . . *presented*, introduced them to the king. Joseph neither for-
- 3 got his duty to his brethren nor to the king. . . . *Pharaoh said*, as Joseph had warned them (xlv. 33). . . . *they said*, answering as they had been instructed. Note how completely they obey the dreamer, whom they once
- 4 so despised. . . . *sojourn*. Not to take up our permanent abode. The statement of their occupation would prepare the king to concede this point also. They regarded Canaan as their proper country and the land of promise (xv. 13; Deut. xxvi. 5). . . . *for*, this was their reason. . . . *no pasture*. They hinted that they wanted to stay only till years of plenty returned once more. . . . *famine . sore*. Else they would not have left their home. . . . *we pray thee . Goshen*. They had Joseph's recommenda-
- 5 tion, but wanted the king's sanction. . . . *Pharaoh . unto Joseph*. Granting more than was asked, for Joseph's sake. (For Jesus' sake, God gives
- 6 us more than we can ask, or think, or are worthy to receive.) . . . *before thee*. In thy hand. Thou knowest it all (xxv. 15). . . . *best of . land*. Most fertile, and in other respects suited for their occupation as shepherds, and their purpose as sojourners. . . . *Goshen*, which therefore was the best, and most answered all their requirements. . . . *men . activity*. Clever in the management of such matters. . . . *rulers*. This might be the imposition of service to remove sense of great indebtedness ; or, most prob., elevation at once to an honourable office. . . . *then* : these things being
- 7 done. . . . *Joseph*, as fond and proud of his father as of his own rank. . . . *brought Jacob*. Glad of the opportunity of doing honour to his father in his old age. A beautiful sight, this rich and noble son thus honouring his poor old father. . . . *before Pharaoh* : king of Egypt, and the Patriarch. Two wonderful men. Worshipper of God, and an idolater. . . . *blessed* : his blessing was all he had to give. . Value of a good man's
- 8 blessing. . . . *How old*. Pharaoh prob. in the prime of life. Jacob
- 9 leaning on the top of his staff. . . . *pilgrimage* (Ps. xxxix. 12; Heb. xi. 9, 13) : life a journey from the cradle to the grave. With Jacob it had indeed been a pilgrimage. (From Canaan to Padan-aram,—thence to Canaan,—up and down in Canaan,—and now down into Egypt.) . . . *few*, the longest life short compared with eternity, and with men's hopes, expectations, wishes, and schemes (Job xiv. 1). . . . *evil*, full of sin, trouble, change, danger, anxiety. . . . *not attained* (xxv. 7; xxxv. 28). The average duration of human life had begun to shorten even in their days,
- 10 yet he hoped to live as long as some of them. . . . *blessed Pharaoh*, once more thanked him for all his goodness to him and his ; and invoked upon him the blessing of the Most High God. . . . *went out*, of the place, to sojourn awhile with his people, and then bless his children and be gathered to his fathers.

A Strange Meeting—a Strange Contrast—a Strange Comment.

- I. A STRANGE MEETING. Meetings of historical characters and their results an interesting study (Diogenes and Alexander, Columbus and Ferdinand, Luther and Charles V., Milton and Galileo, &c. See *Interviews of Great Men*, published by Darton and Co., London). None more remarkable than this. (1.) Strange circumstances led to it. (2.) A strange introduction given to it. Joseph presented five of his brethren to the king. These probably were the five eldest, who were at this time advanced in life. (3.) Strange conversation marked it. Pharaoh, apparently overwhelmed by the venerable aspect of Jacob, inquired his age. Jacob, talking to a much younger man, calls his own life short. (4.) Strange consequences flowed from it. Nearly 400 years ago this meeting left its mark on history, never to be effaced. Consequences to Israel and Egypt. (5.) After the farewell was spoken they appear never to have seen each other again.
- II. A STRANGE CONTRAST. (1.) A patriarch and a prince. The one the head of God's chosen people, now numbering a few souls, to become a nation; the other the head of a mighty people, already a great nation. (2.) A servant of God, and a worshipper of idols. The one the head of a people who were to become great and powerful; the other the king of a nation that should afterwards be humbled. (3.) An Israelitish shepherd, and an Egyptian monarch. The occupation of the one an abomination to the other. (4.) A poor man, and a rich man. The one, through his son, the benefactor and the deliverer of the other. (5.) A very aged man, and a man in the prime of life. Age of Pharaoh uncertain, but the age of Jacob 130 years.
- III. A STRANGE COMMENT, i. e. on life. (1.) It is a pilgrimage. Not a settled, permanent, certain state. A journey from the cradle to the grave. Among strange people, scenes, trials, and joys. Over hills of prosperity and across plains of content, down valleys of sorrow and poverty. (2.) Counted by days. The unit of measurement very short. Know not what a day may bring forth. (3.) Few. Yet 130 years. How few are *our* years! Few as compared with eternity; or even with life of many (Methusaleh, &c.). Few, compared with hopes, projects, &c. (4.) Evil. Full of sin, sorrow, &c. Little done that is good. Man born to trouble. Uncertain. Full of changes. (5.) Yet the longest life only a pilgrimage, and reckoned by days.

LEARN—

- I. The best meeting for us is the meeting of the penitent sinner with the merciful Saviour. Arrangements are made for it, good results will inevitably flow from it. The closet is the audience-chamber.
- II. The best contrast for us is between the old state of nature and the new state of grace. May we all realize it, and enjoy its blessings.
- III. Then our new life, hopes, &c., will be a comment on the Saviour's power, and on the work of the Holy Spirit (written epistles, &c.). And when this short pilgrimage is over, we shall, in eternity, comment upon the wonderful love of God, and the blessed life in heaven.

B.C. 1704—1701. Gen. xlvii. 13—31.

- 13 *no bread*: no food, but especially no corn. The famine had lasted two years. During that time the people had been purchasing corn out of the
 14 royal stores,—the fifth that was gathered. . . . *gathered . money*, by sale of corn. How great must the previous plenty have been, since one-fifth (which of five average years' produce would have sufficed for not more than one year and a half) had fed the nation for two years, and still there was "corn in Egypt". . . . *Pharaoh's house*, his treasury. Like a good
 15 steward, Joseph kept a true account. . . . *Give us bread*: which had he done, he would have pauperized the nation; teaching them henceforth to look for gifts instead of purchases. Besides, many might pretend they had no money if he began to give; and also get more than their share. . . .
 16 *Give . cattle*. He would not *give* till there was neither money nor money's worth to be had. Thus the corn lasted longer, since men would not part
 17 with property but at the last pinch. . . . *cattle*, for which they had no herbage. Joseph had now to keep the cattle of which his brethren, expert in those
 18 matters, would prob. the overseers (v. 6). . . . *second year*, after the money was gone, not second of seven years. . . . *bodies*, ourselves to sell as
 19 slaves. . . . *lands*, all barren. . . . *buy us*. "All that a man hath will he
 20 give for his life." . . . *land . Pharaoh's*: who was thus made the one
 21 great land-owner in the nation. . . . *people*, who had crowded together in the great store cities, their land not being their own. . . . *removed*. Good this for present health and future prosperity. . . . *end . other*:
 22 equally, according to the necessities of the case. . . . *Only* (Ezra vii. 24). . . . *priests (marg.)*. . . . *portion*: a fixed allowance (Pr. xxx. 8;
 23 Ez. xvi. 27). . . . *Behold*. "Ye are not your own". . . . *seed*, now work as servants. (Thus should we as servants of Christ. We have seed to
 24 sow on land belonging to the great King.) . . . *fifth part*. The proportion that had been saved for them. This not oppressive, since the regu-
 25 lar increase of the land was thirty-fold. . . . *saved . lives* (xlv. 5). The people joyfully and gratefully accepted the proposition. (What return do we make to *One* who has saved us? Rom. xii. 1). . . . *find grace*, favour
 26 (xxxiii. 15). . . . *made . law*. Having effected this great reform, he placed it on a secure footing. . . . *this day*: the time when Moses wrote the history. Thus industry was stimulated, and a provision made for future
 27, 28 dearth. . . . *grew* (xlv. 3), in wealth and numbers. . . . *seventeen years*, for 12 years after the famine was over. Did not return, since God had
 29 not given the command. . . . *must die*, as all men *must* (Heb. ix. 27). . . . *grace . sight*. The father acknowledges the supremacy of the son. . . . *thigh*, hip. This was equivalent to swearing by the angel of the covenant, whose touch had dislocated that joint (less. 29). . . . *kindly . truly*. And kindly by dealing truly. . . . *bury . Egypt*. He yearned even in death for the promised land. There is a better land for us, not to be
 30 buried but to live in for ever (l. 25). . . . *lie . fathers* (2 Sam. xix. 37). . . .
 31 *bury, &c.* (xlix. 29; l. 5, 13). . . . *sware*, with his hand under his father's hip joint. . . . *Israel*, a prevailer to the last. . . . *bowed* (xlviii. 2; 1 Ki. i. 47; Heb. xi. 21), in weakness, and probably in worship also.

To the Egyptians—to the Israelites—to the Family of Joseph.

- I. TO THE PEOPLE OF EGYPT. The policy of Joseph brought the whole country under the crown. Land, cattle, even the people themselves—the priests and their lands, &c., excepted—became crown property. “This is one of the greatest, if not the greatest, social revolution recorded in history. Under the pressure of famine an entire nation is reduced from freedom to dependence.” Yet his measures were highly popular. If the usual division of lands, one-third each to king, priests, army, previously existed; then this act of Joseph was the resumption of the crown lands, and re-letting of them on one uniform plan. The removal of people to cities, away from dangerous situations near the river. When the famine was over, the people who had moved nearer than usual to the low-water mark would be exposed to great peril by the sudden rise of the water. Another effect was that the people were brought into closer contact with civilizing influences of cities.
- II. TO THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL. Possibly it secured their preservation as a distinct people. Hitherto they had dwelt in the land of promise as an increasing colony,—one large household. Not sufficiently wealthy or numerous to excite the cupidity or fear of surrounding tribes. Not difficult to see what their position would have been in a few generations in the Holy Land. In Egypt they were protected until they were strong enough to go forth to conquer the land that was promised to the seed of Abraham. In Egypt also they were trained in the presence of the most gigantic and elaborate system of idolatry in existence at that period. The vanquished gods of Egypt, at the time of the Exodus, demonstrating the power of the true Jehovah, was ever remembered and celebrated in their religious assemblies. Dwelling at peace in Egypt, they were able to increase in numbers and in riches, as they could not had they remained in Canaan, themselves often attacked, and their property carried off by neighbouring peoples. Intermarriages with the Canaanites had also been the cause of much evil.
- III. TO JOSEPH AND HIS SONS. It gave to the 11th son of Jacob a position among his brethren that he could not have attained had he continued to dwell among them at home. Instead of having one share, Joseph, in the person of his sons, has two shares of the divided patrimony of Jacob. The events of the years of famine also led to much reformation of character among Joseph’s brethren. Much that was evil was repented of, and confessed; and much that was good was developed. Joseph was supplied with an opportunity of showing his filial love and his fraternal regard, and of presenting for all time a history full of instruction, as it was marked by much piety and wisdom, and illustrated the advantages derived from the divine presence and help. With thankfulness would the children of Joseph treasure up the memory of their illustrious father.
- LEARN—How individual piety is owned and blessed of God.

B.C. 1689. Gen. xlviii. 1—22.

- 1 *these things* (see less. 45). The national reform. The settlement of Israel. The end of famine. Return of plenty. The land now rejoicing, and Joseph in the zenith of his fame. . . . *Joseph*, who was in the capital and in his palace. . . . *father . sick*. That was all. It was not needful to send invitation. . . . *and he*. Joseph went at once, with his children. Joseph was at this time 56 years of age. In the full maturity of his wisdom and power. . . . *Manasseh* = who causes to forget; his eldest son by Asenath; born before the famine (xli. 50, 51). . . . *Ephraim* = double increase; second son by Asenath; also born before the famine (xli. 50—
- 2 52), consequently at this time above 20 years old. . . . *strengthened himself*,
- 3 and the good news of his son's coming would strengthen him. . . . *Jacob*, old, and dying. . . . *Luz*, or Bethel (xxviii. 13, 19; xxxv. 6, 9). Of all his
- 4 past life the place of prayer was now remembered. . . . *said*. His memory
- 5 retained words spoken above 70 years before. . . . *thy two sons . mine*. Jacob adopts these two. Hence Joseph became the head of two tribes.
- 6 *as Reuben, &c.*, with equal rights. . . . *issue*. Joseph's other children and
- 7 their descendants were included in the posterity of these two. . . . *Rachel*. This allusion to R. clearly shows that Jacob intended to honour her by this adoption of her son's children. . . . *I buried*. The old man's memory lingers among these scenes of the by-gone. . . . *Ephrath* (xxxv. 9, 16,
- 8 19). . . . *beheld*, imperfectly saw. . . . *Who . these?* He would have Joseph
- 9 attest their sonship. . . . *God . given* (Ps. cxxvii. 3). . . . *he, Jacob*. . . . *I . bless*, impart to them, as the inheritor of covenant blessings, a solemn
- 10 benediction (xxvii. 4). . . . *dim* = heavy (Isa. vi. 10; Eccl. xii. 3).
- 11 *kissed* (xxvii. 27). . . . *not thought*, not expected. Had given up all hope of seeing thee. . . . *and lo*. God was better to him than his fondest
- 12 wishes. . . . *knees*, i. e. Jacob's. He was sitting on the couch side, and his
- 13 grandsons were standing thus. . . . *bowed*, Joseph. . . . *took . both*: Manasseh as eldest, towards the right hand of Jacob. . . . *right hand . Ephraim*.
- 14 Therefore crossing his hands. . . . *laid it . head*. "A symbolical sign by which the person acting transferred to another a supersensual power or gift" (*Delitzsch*). (Num. xxviii. 18, 23; Deut. xxxiv. 9; Mat. xix. 13; Ac. vi. 6). . . . *wittingly*, knowingly, intentionally. He thus transferred the blessing which he implored for them from his own and his father's
- 15, 16 God. . . . *God*, of promise and providence. . . . *Angel . redeemed*, saved, delivered. . . . *my name* (Amos ix. 12; Ac. xv. 17). . . . *grow, &c.* (Num.
- 17 xxvi. 34, 37). . . . *displeased* = was evil, or wrong, in his eyes (xxviii.
- 18 8). . . . *Not so*. He thought his father in blindness had made a mistake.
- 19 *be great*: under Moses, Manasseh numbered 20,000 more than Ephraim (Num. xxvi. 34, 37). . . . *greater*. This began to be fulfilled in the time of the Judges, when Ephraim took the lead of the 10 tribes, and its name equalled the name of Israel. The blessing not a mere pious wish, but of
- 20 prophetic significance and force. . . . *that day*, at that time. . . . *Israel*
- 21 *bless*. In thy name shall the nation pronounce its benedictions. . . . *I die*. as all men must, and leave their friends. . . . *God . with you*. He—the great Father—remains. Let this be the comfort of the bereaved (xlvi. 4;
- 22 i. 24). . . . *bring, &c.*: fulfilled in their posterity. . . . *I . given thee* (Josh. xxiv. 32; 1 Chron. v. 2; Jo. iv. 5). Joseph became the head of two tribes by virtue of this adoption and the accompanying blessing. . . . *I took* (xv. 16; xxxiv. 28; Josh. xvii. 14). The spirit and covenant blessing of Israel, the prevailer, working out in his descendants.

 Old Man's Sickness—Old Man's Memory—Old Man's Blessing.

- I. THE OLD MAN'S SICKNESS. Jacob has now been seventeen years in Egypt, and is 147 years of age. He has dwelt among his children and their families in Goshen, cared for and nourished by his beloved Joseph. The infirmities of old age have increased upon him, and his last sickness draws nigh. A messenger is sent to warn Joseph of the approaching death of his father. Joseph sets out with his two sons to see his father once more (xlvi. 4). How much better was God to Jacob than his life merited or his fears anticipated. "He delighteth in mercy." The pain and sorrow of dying mitigated by the presence and kind offices of dear friends. Whom *He* loveth, *He* loveth to the end. The joy of Jacob when it is told him that Joseph is coming. He strengthened himself, and sat up. Good news infuse new life. How strong in death are those who feel that Christ, the great deliverer, is near.
- II. THE OLD MAN'S MEMORY. In youth hope is strong, in old age, memory. The memory of the aged recalls distant things. The recent are apt to be forgotten. Before the old man's mind memory rolls out the picture of his journey from Padan. He once more beholds the death of his dear Rachel. Her sepulchre rises to view. He knows the spot, and now dwells upon it. So one day, if our life be spared, will the memory of the past be present with us. The influence of the present on that future. Let us not, by our conduct now, charge our memory with painful incidents, or we may have to say:—"Thou makest me to possess the sins of my youth." Happy shall we be if, among our memories of the past, we can recall an early attachment to truth, &c., especially to Jesus. The past never dies. Memory carries the present forward into the future.
- III. THE OLD MAN'S BLESSING. (1.) *Valuable*. The blessing of a good old man not to be slighted. The blessing of such a man as Jacob most precious. It involved the transmission of covenant mercies. Jacob's relation to the people of God, federal and representative. (2.) *Discriminating*. He distinguished between the elder and younger son. By supernatural illumination he specially indicated the supremacy of the younger. (3.) *Prophetic*. He not only foretold the pre-eminence of Ephraim, but predicted their admitted greatness by all Israel. (4.) *Practical*. He gave, as the covenant owner of the promised land, great material wealth to these adopted children of Joseph. His blessing had the force of law—a last will and testament. The bequest was allowed. (5.) *Pious*. He referred what he did to the will of God. Acknowledged the good hand of the Lord his God, and the angel who redeemed him from all evil.
- LEARN—I. The sickness which is unto death will soon be upon us.
 II. The duty of being kind to the sick and afflicted.
 III. To guard the treasures of memory. And take care that there shall be among them the memory of forgiven sin.
 IV. To seek to deserve the blessing of the aged.
 V. Above all to seek early the blessing and favour of God.

B.C. 1689—1635. Gen. l. 1—26.

- 1 *Joseph*. His father being dead (xlix. 33). . . . *fell*, in an agony of grief
2 (xlv. 4). . . . *wept* (2 Ki. xiii. 14). . . . *embalm*. An Eastern custom;
specially needful in this case, since Jacob was to be buried so far away.
A process by which bodies were preserved. Occupied 40 days. 3 modes:
(1.) Most costly, a talent of silver, ab. £250. Brain extracted. Intes-
tines removed. Cavity washed out with palm-wine, then filled with myrrh,
cassia, &c.; sewed up, steeped 70 days in natron; washed and covered
with gummed bandages. (2.) Cost 20 minæ = £81. Intestines not re-
moved, but oil of cedar injected; thus the entrails were dissolved and
removed. Body then steeped, &c., as before. (3.) Mere rinsing of abdo-
men with *syrmæa* = mixture of senna and cassia, then steeping, &c., as
before. The embalmed body, called a 'mummy.' Hebrew E. not so care-
3 ful and costly as Egyptian. . . . *fulfilled*, during first process. . . . *Egypti-*
ans: even they had learned to respect the great man (Num. xx. 29;
4,5 Deut. xxxiv. 8). . . . *house* (Esth. iv. 2). . . . *let . go*: would have Pha-
6 raoh's permission to fulfil his father's wish. . . . *Pharaoh*, willing to
7 gratify a faithful servant. . . . *went up*: a long journey, and such a
funeral procession as prob. the world never saw before or since. . . . *with*
8 *him*, out of respect and as a body guard. . . . *his brethren*. Some of them
9 were now aged men. . . . *chariots*, &c.: in great pomp, splendour, and
10 numbers. . . . *Atad* = the Southern buckthorn (Christ's thorn), prob. S.
11 of Hebron (*T. L. B.* 580). . . . *Abel-mizraim*, meadow, or mourning of
12 Egypt. The mourners regarded by the Canaanites as Egyptians. . . . *sons*
did: respected his dying wish. Yet it was Joseph especially who pro-
mised, as having most power to fulfil it (see also xlix. 29, 30; Ac. vii. 16).
13,14 *Machpelah* (xxiii. 16, less. 20). . . . *returned*, to his office and duties.
15 *father . dead*. To whose influence, and not to Joseph's affection, they
attributed their kind treatment. . . . *evil did*. Their conscience still
16 disturbed them. . . . *messenger*, some one whom they thought had influence
17 with Joseph. . . . *did . evil*. They confess their past guilt. . . . *forgive*:
they sue for pardon, who were already forgiven. . . . *Joseph wept*. He
18 grieved at being so mistrusted. . . . *brethren . down*: in their fear, they
19 sent first. . . . *thy servants*: dream fulfilled again. . . . *Fear not*. Do not
be so doubtful and full of awe, as if I were more than a man, and your
brother. . . . *of God*: to him let your repentance and confession be made
(Deut. xxxii. 25; 2 Ki. v. 7; Job xxxiv. 29; Ro. xii. 19; Heb. x. 30).
20 *thought evil* (Ps. lvi. 5; Isa. x. 7). . . . *but God* (xlv. 5, 7; Ac. iii. 13—
21 15). . . . *spake kindly*, to remove all doubt of his full pardon. (Do we for-
22 give as we hope to be forgiven?) . . . *dwelt*, in honour and wealth; loved
by his brethren, and respected by the nation he had saved. . . . *an hundred*
23 *and ten years*. Life still more shortened. . . . *third generation* = his great-
great-grandchildren. No difficulty if the dates be properly regarded and
calculated. . . . *Machir* = sold. . . . *Joseph's knees*, as little children.
Egypt's great lord nursing his grandchildren, and finding relief, amid the
24 cares of state, in the joys of home. . . . *I die*. The young died before the
aged. . . . *visit*, to help and succour (xv. 14; xlv. 4; xlvii. 21; Ex. iii.
25 16, 17; Heb. xi. 22). . . . *an oath*, as his father had of him. . . . *my bones*,
as they had of their father. It was their great desire to be buried in the
26 old country. . . . *coffin*: a mummy-case made in the shape of the human
body, and painted with the likeness of the person enclosed. Joseph was
thus kept until the children of Israel went back to Canaan.

Patriarch's Departure—Magnificent Funeral—End of Great Viceroy.

I. THE PATRIARCH'S DEPARTURE. (1.) A *hint of immortality*.

Amid the shadows of the past there were beams of light that spoke of a future state (life and immortality brought to light by the gospel). Jacob "was gathered to his people" (xlix. 33). Jehovah was known as "the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob." He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. The patriarchs were therefore living. To them Jacob was "*gathered*." (2.) An *illustration of natural sorrow*. Joseph "fell on his father's face, and wept upon him, and kissed him." Picture this affecting sight. Wealth and power had not hardened Joseph's heart. We sorrow not, as they that have no hope. (3.) An *illustration of filial obedience*. Joseph remembering his promise to his father (xlvii. 29—31), had him embalmed, &c. Do we remember a dying parent's wishes, not to carry him to the promised land, but to meet him there?

II. THE MAGNIFICENT FUNERAL. (1.) There was the usual ceremonious mourning of many days. (2.) Joseph seeks permission of the king to bury his father. (3.) At the head of a great retinue he passes up once more to Canaan. How great the difference between his leaving and entering Canaan. 39 years have elapsed. The youth of 17 has become a man of 56. The slave has become a prince. Both were occasions of grief. Then he was leaving his father through the treachery of his brothers; now he is burying his father with his brethren around him. (4.) Such a funeral never before seen in Canaan. The Canaanites find that the old shepherd who went away 17 years before is a great man. So sometimes men are brought back to be buried among the people who thought little of them while they lived. (*Ill.* the funeral of Cobden in the Sussex village, &c.)III. THE END OF THE GREAT VICEROY. This occurred 54 years after the death of Jacob. Very little is recorded of the events of that period. How many kings reigned in Egypt we are not told. Joseph, however, appears to have maintained his state and his influence. "*He dwelt in Egypt*." Doubtless he moved among the great lords of the land, and was pointed out to the children as the wonderful man who 70 years ago had saved their ancestors from death. Imagine the aged man moving through admiring crowds, regarded as a saviour by all classes. How meekly he bears his honours. Retains to the last his forgiving spirit, his love of home and country, and his religion. (1.) Note especially his great grief that his brothers should doubt him (*vv.* 15—21). (2.) Note also the pledge he took of them, that when the people returned he was to be buried in Canaan. He might have had some splendid mausoleum in Egypt. Preferred to rest in the soil of the land of promise. His faith in believing that there would be an exodus of his people. His wish handed down from generation to generation, as a sacred trust.

LEARN—To rejoice in our clearer light of immortality.

B.C. 1577-3. Ex. i. 1-22.

- 1-5 *names*. A recapitulation of the heads of tribes. . . *seventy souls*, including Jacob, and Joseph with his two sons: or 66 apart from these. Arranged according to the mothers, they stand thus: *Leah*, 6 sons, 23 grandsons, 2 great-grandsons, 1 daughter: $6 + 23 + 2 + 1 = 32$. *Zilpah*, 2 sons, 11 grandsons, 2 great-grandsons, 1 daughter: $2 + 11 + 2 + 1 = 16$. *Rachel*, 2 sons, 10 grandsons, 2 great-grandsons: $2 + 10 + 2 = 14$. *Bilhah*, 2 sons, 5 grandsons: $2 + 5 = 7$. Total: $32 + 16 + 14 + 7 = 69$, and with Jacob = 70. Stephen (Ac. vii. 14) speaks of 75; according to the LXX., which has 75 in Gen. xvi. 8-27 and here. (An interpolation, the 3 grandsons and 2 great-grandsons of Joseph being reckoned in.) The mention of the number that went down places the multiplication, and
- 6 fulfilment of the promise, in their true light. . . *Joseph died*, 54 years after Jacob. . . *that generation*, who knew Joseph. Another race had
- 7 uprisen both of Egyptians and Israelites. . . *fruitful* (Gen. xvi. 3; Deut. xxvi. 5; Ps. cv. 24; Ac. vii. 17). Terms used in this verse to place the rapid and vast increase of the people in an emphatic light, as a wonderful thing, only to be accounted for on the ground of special providence, fulfilling a special promise. . . *new king*, who forgot the old obligation and deliverance of the nation, but for which he had not been so rich or mighty.
- 9 *his people*, his counsellors. . . *mightier*. *we*: owing to God's special care,
- 10 which he did not see. . . *Come* (Ps. x. 2; lxxxiii. 3, 4). . . *wisely*, prudently, craftily (Job v. 13; Ps. cv. 25; Prov. xvi. 25; xxi. 30; Ac. vii. 19). . . *out . land*. A thing that the first Pharaoh would not have prevented. Indeed a brief sojourn only was at first meditated. . . *taskmasters*, overseers. . . *treasure cities*. Pharaoh would have had little treasure to store but for Joseph. . . *Pithom* = abode of Atum; prob. the *Patumos* of Herodotus (ii. 158). E. of Pelusiac branch of Nile. . .
- 12 *Rameses*, or *Raameses* = son of the sun. Situation not certain. . . *multiplied*, God still preserving them. Persecution the means of growth. Blood
- 13 of martyrs the seed of the Church. . . *rigour*, severity. The utmost was
- 14 exacted of them. . . *lives bitter* (ii. 23; vi. 9; Num. xx. 15; Ac. vii. 19, 24). . . *morter* (Ps. lxxxi. 6). . . *field*. They were employed in building and husbandry. . . *midwives*, of which there were many, though only
- 16 two of the chief are named. . . *son . kill*. In this way it was believed
- 17 that the increase of Israel would be prevented. . . *feared God* (Prov. xvi. 6). . . *not . king* (Dan. iii. 16, 18; vi. 13; Ac. v. 29). . . *said . then*.
- 19 He soon received information that they had not obeyed him. . . *midwives said*. They made a plausible excuse. . . *lively*, active and strong, not needing the assistance of the midwives (Josh. ii. 4; 2 Sam. xvii. 19, 20).
- 20 *dealt well*, preserved them from the wrath of the king (Prov. xi. 18; Eccl. viii. 12; Is. iii. 10; Heb. vi. 10). . . *made . houses*. Established their households and prospered them (1 Sam. ii. 35; 2 Sam. vii. 11, 13, 27, 29;
- 22 1 Ki. ii. 24; xi. 38; Ps. cxxvii. 1). . . *his people*, the Egyptians, who were over the Israelites, and dwelt amongst them; and might know of the birth of children. . . *river* (Ac. vii. 19). Pharaoh thought he was now safe, the execution of the children being in the hands of the Egyptians.

[Except perhaps in cases of adult classes, it would be well to omit vv. 15-21.]

Cruel Taskmasters—Afflicted People—Heavenly Helper.

- I. THE CRUEL TASKMASTERS. The Egyptians. (1.) *Their motive.* Fear, occasioned by the rapid and astonishing increase of the people. From this three evils might arise. (a.) They might ultimately possess the whole land. (b.) They might form an alliance with the enemies of Egypt (v. 10), or, (c.) They might escape from bondage. (2.) *Their conduct.* (a.) They first tried to wear their life away, and exhaust physical energy, by imposing hard toils. On the failure of this course, they (b.) sought, by royal proclamation, to procure the death of all the male children. (3.) *Their great sin.* Sin of ingratitude. Egypt owed Israel a debt of gratitude it could never repay. Ought to have remembered the past. They thus returned evil for good. They made slaves of men who by right were free. Forced their old benefactors to become serfs, and made the serfdom harder by much ingenious cruelty.
- II. THE AFFLICTED PEOPLE. The Israelites. (1.) *Their sufferings.* (a.) The free became slaves. (b.) They were compelled to labour beyond natural strength; as brick-makers, and builders, and husbandmen. (c.) The parent was to be deprived of his children. (d.) There was to be the gradual extinction of their nation by the destruction of all the males, and the absorption, probably, of the females into the alien people. (2.) *Their multiplication.* (a.) Greater in proportion to their sufferings. They were being disciplined by hardship for their wilderness life. (b.) This increase miraculously provided for, to secure their triumphal Exodus. (c.) Their living all together in one part of Egypt—Goshen; and in that part nearest to the way to liberty providentially provided for. This aided their increase and their escape. Their sufferings made them the more anxious to escape (*Donne's Essays*, x. pt 2).
- III. THEIR HEAVENLY HELPER. God. (1.) He heard their cry. A "refuge in trouble." A "refuge for all that are oppressed." "This God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even unto death." "The same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." (2.) He raised up human helpers. Filled the hearts of the midwives with his fear, and with human pity; and providentially rewarded them. (3.) Meanwhile also he raised up Moses in this evil time (less. 49). The Divine King was mightier than Pharaoh, and more merciful. While Egypt's king thus cruelly treated a people to whom the nation was much indebted, God mercifully regarded a thoughtless race.
- LEARN—I. The sin of cruelty and ingratitude.
 II. The folly of base and unworthy suspicions.
 III. That "many are the afflictions of the righteous, yet God delivereth him out of them all."
 IV. That this merciful God is unchangeable.

Hymns: "Though troubles assail" (*Newton*); "Eternal God, we look to thee" (*Merrick*); "Thou very present aid" (*Wesley*); "How firm a foundation," &c. (*Kirkham*); "Our God, our help in ages past" (*Watts*).

B.C. 1571. Ex. ii. 1—10.

- 1 *a man*: Amram (= *kindred of the lofty one*, i. e. God), father of Moses, Aaron, and Miriam (Ex. vi. 18, 20; Num. iii. 19; xxvi. 58, 59; 1 Ch. vi. 2, 3, 18; xxiii. 12—14; xxiv. 20). . . . *a daughter*: Jochebed (= *whose glory is Jehovah*). Exact relation of this husband and wife, prior to marriage, is doubtful. The words "son and daughter" often mean simply
- 2 descendants. J. was prob. half-sister to Kohath. . . . *bare*=gave birth to. *a son*, Moses (v. 10). . . . *goodly child*, very beautiful (Ac. vii. 20; "exceeding fair," or *lit.* "fair to God," which implies more than mere physical beauty, namely, Divine favour, Ps. cvi. 23; Is. xlix. 1. See also Heb. xi. 23; "she saw," &c. Doubtless she was divinely directed). . . . *hid*, concealed him from the Egyptians. . . . *three months*. How great her
- 3 constant fear of discovery all this time! . . . *ark*, a kind of cradle or basket. *bulrushes*, the paper reed (*C. papyrus*, whence our word "paper"). . . . *daubed*, coated it thoroughly. . . . *slime . pitch*, bitumen, to make it water-proof. (The coracles, or boats of ancient Britons, were of basket-work covered with hides.) . . . *flags*, marsh plants, such as the reed-mace (*Typha latifolia*=the common bulrush). . . . *river*, the Nile. "Casting the child
- 4 upon God" (*Trapp*). . . . *sister*: Miriam (=rebellion), (1 Ch. vi. 3; Num. xxvi. 59). About 10 or 12 years old at this time. . . . *afar off*. But God was nearer (Ps. xxvii. 10). . . . *wit*=know. . . . *daughter*, a princess (Ac. vii. 21). . . . *Pharaoh*, a king of the house or dynasty of Pharaoh. . . . *came down*, according to custom, from the palace. . . . *wash*=bathe. . . . *maidens*, attendants; perhaps slaves. . . . *walked along*, with their royal
- 6 mistress. . . . *river's side*, to a spot convenient for their purpose. . . . *she*, the princess. . . . *opened*, wondering what might be therein. . . . *saw . child*: "a goodly child." . . . *wept*. Of all things most fitted to touch her woman's heart. Providence works in this world by such common things as frowns and tears (Ps. lvi. 8). . . . *compassion*. A gentle scion of a cruel sire. . . . *said*: instinctively surmising the origin of the babe. . . . *Hebrews*: so called from Heber (Lu. iii. 35), or more properly from the
- 7 Hebrew—Abraham—the man who passed over. . . . *sister*, who meanwhile had drawn near. . . . *nurse*, to tend and nurture the child. . . . *Hebrew women*, whom the princess might think would more readily care for such a child than any Egyptian. . . . *for thee*, as its protectress. What a Hebrew mother might not do for herself, she might do for an Egyptian and
- 8 a princess. . . . *maid went*: with how joyous a heart, and with what wonderful news. . . . *mother*, whom, of course, the princess did not know
- 9 to be such. . . . *said . her*. Addressing her authoritatively. Though the mother would not need to be peremptorily commanded. . . . *nurse . me*. She would gladly have nursed it for herself. Now, with protection and wages, she has the unfettered exercise of her mother's love. . . . *wages*. Her best wages would be the deep joy of her heart, and her gratitude to God. *took child*: how thankfully. . . . *nursed it*. No need now to hide it. . . .
- 10 *grew*, thrived under all this care. . . . *she*. When it was old enough to be weaned, probably some long time after. . . . *brought . him*. Henceforth she might only see her child occasionally, or hear of the princess's adopted son. . . . *her . son*. Was adopted by her; the king gratifying this strange fancy of his daughter. . . . *Moses*=drawn out. His name would be a perpetual reminder to him of his early preservation. Doubtless in this childhood there would be the instilling of religious principles. Moses never forgot his home and people.

The Child—the Mother—the Sister—the Princess.

- I. THE GOODLY CHILD. *Moses*. (1.) Its *birth*. (a.) In an evil time. The edict of Pharaoh, like the sword of Damocles, over its head. God takes care that men needed for his work in evil times shall be born in them (*ill.* Wickliffe, Luther, &c.). (b.) Of an oppressed people and humble origin. Great men often of lowly extraction. (2.) Its *appearance*. "Goodly." Beautiful, not only to a mother's eyes, but really so. Its *beauty* appealed to the mother, as its *tears* to the princess. (3.) The *excitement* caused by its birth. Babies usually welcomed. Here were fear and sorrow and perplexity. This divine gift becomes a trial, through the wickedness of man. Sin turns blessings into curses, and joy into sorrow.
- II. THE ANXIOUS MOTHER. *Jochebed*. (1.) Her *first feelings*. Touched by the rare loveliness of her child. Bravely resolves to evade the decree. She had another son—Aaron—now three years of age (Ex. vii. 7); but could not spare *one*. (2.) Her *careful concealment*. For three months she contrived to preserve her secret from the Egyptians. Anxiously thinking what she might presently do. (3.) Her *ingenious device*. Concealment no longer possible. She will trust God rather than Pharaoh. God can preserve the child even from the waves and monsters of the Nile. The ark. At early morn she places it, unseen, among the flags, after giving it what might be its last meal. Bids Miriam watch.
- III. THE OBEDIENT DAUGHTER. *Miriam*. (1.) Her *obedience*. Did as she was bid. The blessing of obedient children. Trusted by the mother. The elder should care for, and watch over, the younger. (2.) Her *surprise*. The princess and her retinue appear. They walk by the river-side towards her brother. She attentively watches. The ark discovered, brought out, and opened. Her anxiety. She approaches. (3.) Her *thoughtfulness*. She is quick-witted. Sees compassion in the princess's face. Shall she fetch a nurse? Of the Hebrew women? (4.) Her *great joy*. Her brother saved. Her return home. Perhaps the mother was praying for the child. Jochebed's surprise and gratitude and joy. A great result grew out of her obedience (1 Pet. i. 14; Eph. vi. 1; Col. iii. 20).
- IV. THE COMPASSIONATE PRINCESS. *Pharaoh's daughter*. Kindness in the house of Pharaoh! "Out of the strong sweetness." Children not always to be judged by their parents. Eli's sons were not godly (1 Sam. ii. 12). Pharaoh's daughter not cruel, as her father. Moved by an infant's tears, she at once comprehends the history of the child. Resolves to adopt it. Providential use of compassion, maternal solicitude, filial obedience, infantile beauty and helplessness. "All things work together for good."

LEARN—I. To prize a mother's love, and return it.

II. To imitate Miriam's obedience and sisterly affection.

III. Not to judge of children by their parents.

IV. To admire the wisdom of Providence.

V. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given"—JESUS.

B.C. 1531. Ex. ii. 11—25.

- 11 *in those days*, of the persecutions of Israel and the preparation of their deliverer. . . . *Moses* . *grown*, in wisdom, stature, and renown, and exploits (Ac. vii. 22). Moses is now 40 years old. We have no history of his early life. . . . *went out*, either in a private or official capacity,—prob. the former. . . . *brethren*, a love for whom he had been nursing amid all his wealth and fame. One knows not whether to admire most his patience for so long, or his boldness now (Heb. xi. 24—26). . . . *burdens* (i. 11) *spied*: a sight that filled him with indignation, though he
- 12 was the meekest of men (Num. xii. 3). . . . *looked*, to see if there were any Egyptians near, lest his act should bring greater troubles upon his brethren. . . . *he slew* (Ac. vii. 24, 25): heroic but questionable. Still not to be judged of by our standard of right. . . . *sand*, on the borders of
- 13 the Nile. . . . *the second*, the day following (Ac. vii. 26—28). . . . *two* . *Hebrews*. Their private feuds aggravated their public wrongs. . . . *thy*
- 14 *fellow*, thy fellow-countryman, thy companion in tribulation. . . . *he said*, i.e. the one who was reproved. . . . *Who* (Ac. vii. 27, 28). *He* was quite willing to be a ruler over his brother, but not that Moses should be a reprov-
er. . . . *intendest*, &c.: prob. the man whom Moses had delivered had spread the news. . . . *Surely* . *known*. Not only was it known to
- 15 man, but to God also (Jas. i. 20). . . . *Pharaoh heard*. The report soon reached the palace. The man reproved, would help to this. By this treachery and pride of the Hebrew, the enfranchisement of his nation was doubtless postponed. . . . *fled* (Ac. vii. 29; Heb. xi. 27). . . . *Midian* (= strife), a son of Abraham by Keturah. Some of his descendants must have occupied part of Arabia Petraea, near Egypt, for Horeb was the dwelling of Jethro, a priest of Midian (Ex. iii. 1; iv. 18—20, 27). . . .
- 16 *well* (Gen. xxiv. 11; xxix. 2). . . . *priest*, or prince; prob. both. . . . *daughters*, who were shepherdesses. . . . *water* (Gen. xxiv. 11; xxix. 2; 1
- 17 Sam. ix. 11). . . . *shepherds*, rude, boorish men. . . . *Moses*, polite and
- 18 chivalrous. This act won for him a wife and a home. . . . *Reuel* (= friend of God), also called Jethro (= his excellence). "Some difficulty has been felt, as if three dif. names were given to the same person—Hobah, Jethro, and Reuel or Raguel. Hobah and Jethro are identical. Prob. Hobah is a personal name, Jethro a title of dignity; and that Hobah or Jethro was the son of Reuel (Num. x. 29). . . . *father*, or grandfather.
- 19 *so soon*. They were then usually delayed by these shepherds. . . . *Egyptian*,
- 20 as by his dress they supposed him to be. . . . *why is it?* That ye have not repaid his politeness. . . . *eat bread* (Gen. xxxi. 54; xliii. 25), be hospitably entertained. . . . *content* = well pleased. . . . *dwell*: having been a great lord in Egypt, he now becomes a shepherd. . . . *Zipporah* (= a little bird). "A peevish piece, he had better haply have been married to a quartan
- 22 *ague*" (*Trapp*). . . . *Gershom* (= a stranger here). Name of the son, a living record of the father's circumstances. We are all strangers here.
- 23 Heaven is our home. . . . *sighed*. The change of their master had not lightened their misery (Num. xx. 16; Deut. xxvi. 7; Ps. xii. 5). . . . *cry*,
- 24 was very loud and earnest (Deut. xxiv. 15; Jas. v. 4). . . . *heard* (vi. 5). *remembered* (Ps. cv. 42; cvi. 45). . . . *covenant* (Gen. xv. 14; xlv. 4). . . .
- 25 *looked* (iv. 31; 1 Sam. i. 11; 2 Sam. xvi. 12; Lu. i. 25). . . . *had respect* = *lit.* knew them. He knew all their misery, and now took steps to deliver them, and fulfil his covenant.

Dickenson's Sacred Oracles, 49. *Wylie's Scenes from the Bible*, 148, 156.

 Strife—Intervention—Flight.

- I. STRIFE. (1.) Between the Egyptian and Hebrew. The Egyptian was smiting the Hebrew. Whipping him to his work, or punishing him for doing less than his allotted task (*ill.* The African slave-driver). Cruel, tyrannical. The strong and protected, persecuted the weak and defenceless. Cowardice of this, *ill.* by conduct of children towards each other. Pride of power. Official meanness. Domineering spirit and conduct. (2.) Between Hebrew and Hebrew. This a worse feature of strife. Fellow bondsmen increasing each others' sufferings. Children of one family striving. Wherefore did they strive? Did he wish to avail himself of the other's skill or industry? Or had one by some evil method obtained the post of overseer, in which he might afflict his brethren and obtain his own advancement? Difficult to conceive the circumstances, and understand the motives.
- II. INTERVENTION. (1.) *The person.* Moses. 40 years of age. Adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter. Learned. Mighty in deeds and words. Honour, title, wealth before him. (2.) *His patriotic feelings.* Did not abandon his nationality. "Not ashamed to call them brethren." Visited them in their scenes of labour. Perhaps his poor oppressed fellow-countrymen thought him a runagate; an apostate from the faith of his fathers; and that with such prospects he would join the oppressor. Men who were mean enough to afflict each other, capable of such suspicions and conduct. (3.) *Slays the Egyptian.* Unjustifiable conduct. "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." Yet it was an heroic act, under the peculiar circumstances. The first blow for freedom. (4.) *Concealment.* Hides the body. (5.) *Second intervention.* Not to kill, but to expostulate. (6.) *Repudiation* of Moses by his brethren. Jesus was despised and rejected, "came to his own, and his own received him not."
- III. FLIGHT OF MOSES. (1.) *The reason.* Pharaoh sought to slay him. Moses, dwelling in the palace, would soon hear of this design. His friends—perhaps the princess if living—would inform him. (2.) *The course of his flight.* Over ground to be presently traversed by the Israelites. A long and solitary journey. His thoughts by the way. (3.) *Incidents of the end.* The well's mouth. How many incidents have occurred at the mouth of wells! The shepherdesses and the boors. Moses's courage and politeness. The Christian should be a true gentleman. The reward of chivalry and politeness. Kind words and deeds easy. Defence of the weak a mark of true nobleness. Moses a real nobleman. Christ mighty to save the weak; and willing.
- LEARN—I. The meanness of taking a base advantage.
 II. The strong should be helpers of the weak.
 III. Jesus, a prophet like unto Moses, raised up to be our peacemaker and deliverer.

B.C. 1491. Ex. iii. 1—22.

- 1 *Now*. This was 40 years after the flight of Moses, he being now 80 years of age. . . . *flock*. Sheep an important element of ancient wealth. Wool and flesh valuable. . . . *Jethro* (less. 50). . . . *back side*, on the west of D. . . . *mountain*. *God*=exceeding great mt. Or so called in regard to the events that marked it (Ex. xviii. 5; 1 Ki. xix. 8). . . . *Horeb*, a mt in the Sinaitic group (*Robinson*); a hilly district, in which Sinai stands (*Bonar*); Horeb and Sinai the same, and special use depends on usage, and not place. Thus in Ex., Lev., Num., and Judg. Sinai is the mt of the law; in Deut. Horeb is so used; in the Psalms both are indifferently employed
- 2 (*Stanley*). . . . *angel*=messenger (Deut. xxxiii. 16; Is. lxiii. 9; Ac. vii. 30). The elements, &c., are often represented in the Bible as angels or messengers. "Yet in such cases God is considered as really though invisibly present" (*Jamieson*). . . . *Fire . bush*, a lively type of the tried Church. The Church subject to fiery trials, but not consumed because of the Divine presence. . . . *bush*, wild acacia, or thorn. Dry with the heat of sun, and
- 3 readily destroyed by fire. . . . *Moses*. His curiosity thus appealed to. . . . *turn aside*, from my calling. . . . *great sight* (Ps. cxi. 2; Ac. vii. 31). . . .
- 4 *called*. A voice coming from the fire increased the surprise. . . . *Moses*, a
- 5 special message. . . . *Here . I*, ready to obey. . . . *said*, &c. Mere scientific curiosity must be replaced by devout reverence. . . . *put off* (xix. 12; Josh. v. 15; Ac. vii. 33). . . . *Moses hid*: perceiving that this was no natural phenomenon, but a divine revelation (Gen. xxviii. 13; Ex. iv. 5; Mat. xxii. 32; Mark xii. 26; Lu. xx. 37; Ac. vii. 34). . . . *afraid* (1 Ki. xix. 13; Is. vi. 1—5). . . . *surely*=certainly. . . . *seen . affliction* (ii. 23; xxiv. 25; Ne. ix. 9; Ps. cvi. 44; Ac. vii. 34). . . . *my people*. Not the less *his* because afflicted. . . . *know . sorrows*. "Sweet support to a sinking soul" (*Trapp*). . . . *come down*. Phrase denoting a set purpose. . . . *flowing*, abounding. . . . *milk*. *All*. to pasturage. . . . *honey*, land of
- 9 flowers and fruit (xiii. 5; Num. xiii. 27; Jer. xi. 5; Eze. xx. 6). . . . *be-*
- 10 *hold*. I, the great God, have not forgotten my people. . . . *I will send*,
- 11 &c. Moses is elected God's ambassador. A great honour. . . . *Who . I*. That was of little moment if God pleased to send him (1 Cor. i. 25—29). . . .
- 12 *I . with thee*, to guide and protect. . . . *when*. Moses was to act in faith.
- 13 The sign should *follow* obedience. . . . *Moses said*. He had not forgotten
- 14, 15 (ii. 14). . . . *I am*, the self-existing and eternal One. . . . *name . ever*,
- 16 i.e. the God of Abraham, &c. (Ps. cxxxv. 13; Hos. xii. 5). . . . *gather*, collect. . . . *elders*, the heads of tribes, that they might make it known to
- 17 the people. . . . *said*. He was to state fully to them the Divine purpose.
- 18 *they*, &c. God would dispose them to listen and obey. . . . *say . him*, first using what the elders would think a reasonable method of escape. God permits them to try what their own plan would be, and see its results. . . .
- 19 *I am sure*, &c. Nevertheless they might try for their own instruction, and that they might learn to trust afterwards in the plans of God. . . . *no, not*,
- 20 &c. See *marg.* . . . *all . wonders* (vii. 3; xi. 9; Deut. vi. 22; Neh. ix. 10; Ps. cv. 27; Ps. cxxxv. 9; Jer. xxii. 20; Ac. vii. 36). . . . *after that*
- 21 (xii. 31). . . . *give . favour*. "It is God that fashioneth men's spirits, and speaketh oftentimes for them in the hearts of their greatest enemies"
- 22 (*Trapp*). (xi. 3; xii. 36; Ps. cvi. 46; Prov. xvi. 7). . . . *borrow*=ask as a gift, not a loan. "Borrow is rendered in Gen. xxxii. 17, *asketh*; in Num. xxvii. 21, *shall ask*; in Deut. xviii. 16, *desirest*; in Josh. ix. 14, *asked*; in Jud. iv. 20, *inquire*; in 1 Sam. xii. 13, *desired*; and so in above 150

The Learned Shepherd—the Great Sight—the Present God.

- I. THE LEARNED SHEPHERD. Historical characters in strange circumstances. Saul seeking his father's asses. David keeping the sheep. Jesus in the workshop of Galilee. Paul at the weaver's loom, &c. Moses a shepherd. (1.) *Humility*. From a palace, &c., he stoops to this lowly life. Proud hearts would have rebelled against such a life. (2.) *Patience*. For 40 years he thus laboured. How many would have fretted at this irksome and monotonous life. A self-constituted genius would have sighed for recognition. Ambition would have planned a way to eminence. We who wonder at his future course may well wonder also at this long endurance. (3.) *Fidelity*. Led his father-in-law's flock. Involved seeking out the best pasturage : folding, and guarding, &c. A good servant in his own house, before God made him a master in Israel. "Faithful in little," &c.
- II. THE GREAT SIGHT. (1.) *Where it appeared*. In the wilderness. God there also. The place afterwards to be marked by his presence. God knew where his servant was. The Church is in a moral wilderness, as a plant of the Lord. (2.) *When it appeared*. In the time of Israel's sorrow ; and Moses's toil. Moses performing his duty when it appeared. God does not call indolent men to serve him. Godly men should be industrious. (3.) *Wherefore it appeared*. (a.) Because the day of deliverance was near. (b.) To instruct the mind of Moses, and excite his curiosity. (c.) To represent the state of the Israelites. A Church in the furnace of affliction. The bush not consumed, though the fire was hot. Israel flourishing in trial. It was not only a "wonder," but a "sign." A *great* sight, but not merely a something to look at and investigate ; but also to learn from.
- III. THE PRESENT GOD. He dwelt in the bush (Mar. xii. 26 ; Lu. xx. 37 ; Ac. vii. 35 ; Deut. xxxiii. 16). God in the bush showed his relation to his people. (1.) *With them in trouble*. Does not allow them to suffer alone. There was one like the Son of man with the three Hebrew children in the furnace. I will be *with thee* in trouble. His presence may be unfelt and unrecognized, but not less real. (2.) *Sustains them in trouble*. Did not take the fire away from the bush, but prevented the bush from being injured. (3.) *With them a source of instruction*. Spoke out of the bush to Moses. Told him what to do. God's presence and voice with his people.

"Far seen across the sandy wild,
Where, like a solitary child,
He thoughtless roam'd and free,
One towering thorn was wrapt in flame—
Bright without blaze it went and came,
Who would not turn and see?"—(Keble.)

LEARN—I. To cultivate high qualities in lowly callings.

II. Seek our comfort in affliction from an ever-present God.

instances in which the word under different forms occurs" (D. B. N. S. ii. 8).

B.C. 1491. Ex. iv. 1—17; 27—31.

- 1 answered, to all these instructions. . . . *they will not*, &c. The message so startling, the people so doubting. . . . *hearken*, practically. . . . *they say*,
- 2 disbelieving. . . . *Lord said*. God removes the hesitation from the mind of Moses by conferring power to work miracles. . . . *What . that*. Draws his attention to a most familiar object. . . . *A rod*, such as shepherds used, from 3 to 6 feet long, and having a curved end, like the handle of a walking-stick. Not a shepherd's crook. . . . *serpent*, a real serpent. . . .
- 3 *Moses fled*: started back in astonishment and fear. . . . *became . rod*. "With this rod he should guide the Israelites, and sting the Egyptians"
- 4 (*Trapp*); (Is. xiv. 27; Jer. viii. 17). . . . *may believe* (Mat. xii. 38; xvi.
- 5 1). . . . *furthermore*: adding sign to sign, to give confidence to Moses, and inspire the people with faith. . . . *Put . bosom*, in the folds of his dress. . . . *leprous . snow*. Naturally of slow growth, the disease was
- 6 instantaneously produced. . . . *turned again*, &c. Immediate recovery from what was naturally a permanent disease, or if cured, very slowly removed
- 7 (Num. xii. 10; 2 Ki. v. 27). . . . *first sign . latter sign*. Divine signs
- 8 have a voice. Lessons of instruction. . . . *water . blood*. A third sign shall be granted. Such were the divine credentials of this great ambassador.
- 9 *not eloquent* = a man of words. Yet God had chosen him. Was not that
- 10 enough? Deeds more needed than words. . . . *man's mouth*. "There is no mouth into which God cannot put fit words. Balaam's ass convinced
- 11 his master" (*Trapp*). . . . *with . mouth*, as well as with thy hand (Is. l. 4; Jer. i. 9; Mat. x. 19; Mark xiii. 11; Lu. xii. 11, 12). He who
- 12 made the weak hand do mighty deeds, could also make his mouth utter mighty words. . . . *wilt* = shouldst. Either because dismayed by the magnitude of the task, or because conscious of his own natural unfitness, Moses presumes to hesitate, and question the wisdom of God. He feared
- 13 also for his life (*vv.* 19, 20). . . . *anger . kindled*. As well it might be at so much doubt and hesitation, notwithstanding all this condescension. . . . *Aaron* (= exalted, perhaps mountaineer), 3 years older than Moses (Ex. vi. 20; vii. 7). . . . *speak well*. Gift of speech a great favour (1 Cor. i. 5). . . . *he cometh*. This God knew, or would bring to pass (v. 27; 1 Sam. x. 2—5). . . . *glad*, to see his long-lost brother; and to hear of the
- 14 message. . . . *put words*, by imparting divine thoughts (Num. xxii. 38; Deut. xviii. 18; Is. li. 16; Jer. i. 9). . . . *thy spokesman*, not his own.
- 15 Aaron was to be merely a mouth to Moses. . . . *thou* (vii. 1; xviii. 19). Each was to be the complement of the other. . . . *this rod*. An old man of 80 years and a shepherd's rod appointed to deliver one nation, and overthrow another.
- 16 *said . Aaron*: speaking to him prob. in a vision. He knew how to fulfil his saying (*v.* 14). . . . *mount . God*, Horeb. . . . *kissed*. Eastern salutation, affection, courtesy, &c. . . . *told Aaron*, as he had been commanded.
- 17 *signs*. He either related, or performed them. . . . *and*. These matters being attended to. . . . *went*, down into Egypt. . . . *elders*, heads of the
- 18 people. . . . *Aaron*, with eloquent tongue. . . . *did . signs*, i.e. Moses performed them. . . . *the people*, i.e. the elders in their representative capacity. We must probably understand that the elders are meant in
- 19 31 many places where the people are named. . . . *people*. The elders first, and then the people themselves, to whom the elders related what they had seen and heard. . . . *visited*, in mercy. . . . *bowed*, as a token of homage and loyalty (Gen. xxiv. 26; Ex. xii. 27; 1 Chron. xxix. 20).

Certificated Ambassador—Gracious Compensation—Brothers' Meeting.

- I. THE CERTIFICATED AMBASSADOR. Moses. (1.) *His hesitation.* Caused by (a.) His own meekness. Had not a high opinion of himself. (b.) His knowledge of the people he was sent to deliver, and also of the oppressor. He had not forgotten their rejection of him. (2.) *His certificate.* Power to work sundry miracles is given. (a.) The rod may be turned into a serpent. (b.) The healthy hand becomes leprous. (c.) Pure water, poured on the ground, becomes blood. Such are the seals of his commission. Like Nicodemus, the people might say:—"Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." "If men believe not Moses," &c. (3.) *His unbelief.* Moses seems, at this time, to rely too much on human qualities. His lack of eloquence, he thinks, will be a great hindrance.
- II. THE GRACIOUS COMPENSATION. Moses and Aaron the complement of each other. The man of words and the man of action. Deeds and words (*ill.* Luther and Melancthon; Paul and Barnabas). Moses's deeds demanded the forceful eloquence of Aaron to eliminate their meaning, and apply it. Aaron's words demanded the corroboration of the deeds of Moses. Moses wrought wonders, and Aaron explained the sign. Human qualities are mercifully distributed. No one man perfect. Each needs the help and talents of others. Providence designs that men should not be independent of one another. "Two heads better than one." Opposites often found in one family. Moses and Aaron,—*brothers*. Different qualities and talents in a household to be used, and combined, for the service of God. Let none envy the gifts of others, but cultivate his own.
- III. THE BROTHERS' MEETING. (1.) *In the wilderness.* Place of brotherly meeting a garden in the desert of life. Each would forget "that great and terrible wilderness" in their joy at again seeing each other. How great the joy of meeting each other where all around is paradise, and no separation or toil in prospect. (2.) *Marked by affection.* They "kissed" each other. Mutual respect and love. Well for brothers when they meet thus. One of these—Moses—80 years of age; Aaron, 83. (3.) *Their intercourse.* Chief matter in hand was Moses's commission. Aaron, the elder, cheerfully takes the second place. Is indebted for even that to the humility of Moses. They journey on together, and at once address themselves to their work.

LEARN—

- I. God's witnesses are witnessed to. Seals to their ministry.
- II. Humbly to regard ourselves, but do any work to which Providence calls us.
- III. Rejoice in others' powers, and cheerfully unite for common ends.
- IV. Thank God for our meeting on earth, and prepare for the better one.
- V. Christ, our elder brother, meets us in the wilderness, salutes us with the kiss of love, and goes with us to all our holy labours.

B.C. 1491. Ps. cv. 26—38.

The key to the meaning of these plagues may prob. be found in the idolatry of Egypt. Each plague was a distinct overthrow of one of the most eminent of Egyptian deities (xii. 11). Israel and Egypt were by these steps led up to the idea of the supremacy of Jehovah over all the gods of the heathen world. One of the most valuable works on this subject is "*The Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation*" (10d. Rel. Tr. Soc.).

- I. (Ex. vii. 19—25). **THE NILE.** The Egyptians worshipped the Nile. "Osiris was the fertilizing river, the fruitful land of E. was his spouse." Here the Egyptians see contempt poured on their great deity. He, in whom they trusted, could not withstand Jehovah. Blood was an abomination to them, to touch it was pollution.
 - II. (Ex. viii. 1—15). **THE FROGS.** The frog was an emblem of the creative attribute (*Pthah*) of their supreme God. Idea traced to prolific character of the female f. Now, what they had regarded with reverential feelings is abhorred. The magicians were permitted to imitate this miracle. But could not remove them, as Pharaoh's appeal to Moses proves (v. 8).
 - III. (Ex. viii. 16—19). **THE LICE.** Egyptians affected great external purity. Priests shaved every third day (*Herodotus*), but neither they nor the sacred beasts escaped (v. 18). "*This*," said they, "is the finger of God."
 - IV. (Ex. viii. 20—32). **THE FLIES.** "Divers sorts" (Ps. cv. 31). Baalzebub = lord of the fly, the fly-destroyer (2 Ki. i. 2, 3, 6, 10), in defiance of whose power this miracle was wrought. The sacred beetle (*Scarabæus sacer*) is a well-known emblem of this deity.
 - V. (Ex. ix. 1—7). **THE BEASTS.** Some of which, as the ox and sheep, were sacred. Apis, the sacred bull, the symbol of Osiris. Doubtless supposed to have a protective power over the cattle. By this miracle this idea was exploded. Cattle of Israel saved (v. 6).
 - VI. (Ex. ix. 8—12). **THE BOILS.** This miracle seems to have been a wider application and more painful form of the preceding plague. The sacred art of physician and magician defied and prostrated. So far the *persons* of the Egyptians had escaped.
 - VII. (Ex. ix. 13—33). **THE STORM.** Rain and hail combine with prodigious power. Extraordinary in Egypt, where rain and hail are *comparatively* unknown. Destruction of herbs and trees, except in Goshen. Pharaoh gives his reluctant consent (v. 28).
 - VIII. (Ex. x. 1—15). **THE LOCUSTS.** Voracious insects, like grasshoppers. 2 to 3 in. long, and winged. They ate up all that the hail had left (v. 15). Again Pharaoh appears to relent (vv. 16, 17).
 - IX. (Ex. x. 16—29). **THE DARKNESS.** The heavenly bodies whom they worshipped are obscured. Day and night alike. A darkness that might be felt. Again Pharaoh promises that they shall depart (v. 28).
 - X. (Ex. xii. 29—36). **THE FIRST-BORN.** Of prince and prisoner (v. 29). Death in every house. The midnight cry (v. 30). Pharaoh sends to Moses, and not only *permits*, but *urges* him to depart (v. 31).
- The hardening of Pharaoh's heart.* From a thing *foreseen* (iii. 9) it became a thing *judicially ordained* (iv. 21; vii. 3, 13; ix. 12). Pharaoh's hardening of his heart was his great sin (viii. 15, 32; ix. 7), and afterwards his punishment (x. 1). So, also (2 Thess. ii. 11; Ro. i. 24, 28; 1 Ki. xxii. 22; Eze. xiv. 9), sinful acts, tempers, &c., indulged in, become, in time, a punishment. What can be more terrible than for God to say "Let him alone" in the practice of evil, amid the increasing light of conscience?

 Their Characteristics—Purpose—Effect.

MIRACLES. (1.) An action *upon*, not *in*, the line of cause and effect. (2.) It is in the sphere of the senses. (3.) It evinces a superhuman power not magic or jugglery—(*Bushnell*). . . . The midwives of young moral truths. The educating expedients of the early periods of the world (*Beecher*). (See *Donne's Essays*, xiii. pt 3.) (1.) Invariably expected in connection with establishment of new religion professing to be divine. (2.) Eminently adapted to impress the unreflecting and instruct the thoughtful. (3.) Have usually secured the desired end (*Miall, Basis of Belief*). . . . All true heavenly miracles have a redemptive character (*Cumming*). An extraordinary divine causality belongs to the very essence of the miracle (*Trench*). A miracle I take to be a sensible operation, which, being above the comprehension of the spectator, and in his opinion contrary to the established course of nature, is taken by him to be divine (*Locke*).

I. CHARACTERISTICS. (1.) *Wonders*. Filled men with astonishment and awe. (2.) *Signs*. Instructive. Showed the power and anger of Jehovah. "This, the finger," &c. (3.) *Punitive* also. They punished the oppressor, while they opened the doors of the house of bondage. (4.) *Emblematical* of the mission and career of Moses. Thunders of Sinai resounded through them all. (5.) *Various*. Attacked both nature and man; animate and inanimate objects; mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms. (6.) *Numerous*. Ten. Indeed more, for there was the undoing as well as the doing.

II. PURPOSE. (1.) *To overthrow the deities of Egypt*. Jehovah the only true God—Lord of lords. (2.) *To punish the oppressor*. Those who long years had made the life of Israel bitter, now taste a worse bitterness than they had inflicted. (3.) *To confound the pride of Pharaoh*. Though he was master in the land. Had need to be taught that there was One by whom kings rule. (4.) *To effect the deliverance of the captives*. They gradually paved the way, and ultimately secured this.

III. EFFECT. (1.) *Upon Pharaoh*. Hardened his heart. In proportion as he set himself against the manifest will of God. So even the glorious gospel of the blessed God is, to some men, the savour of death unto death. At last even Pharaoh's resistance was broken. (2.) *Upon the Egyptians*. They were gradually subdued, till at length they entreated Pharaoh to let Israel go, as earnestly as ever Moses and Aaron did. (3.) *Upon Israel*. They had dwelt secure while these terrors were abroad. God had hidden them in the chambers of his love and mercy. Their confidence restored. They organize their flight. They see the time is at hand. And at last wait for the final word.

LEARN—I. To stand in awe of the great God and sin not.

II. To admire the resources of infinite wisdom and power.

III. To take heed lest the gospel be a source of condemnation.

IV. To expect no miracles, but turn to the sure word of prophecy.

V. To rejoice in our great deliverer, Jesus Christ.

B.C. 1491. Ex. xii. 1—28.

1 *spake*. What the *mode* of Divine communication we know not, the *fact*
 2 itself is clear from the consequences. . . . *month*. A new era is intro-
 duced. The seventh *civil*, becomes the first *sacred*, month. The *civil* year
 began with first new moon in Oct., the *sacred* with first new moon in April,
 because the date of Exod. was 15th of Nisan. . . . *beginning* = first. In
 3 order and importance. . . . *Speak* . *congregation*. This they would do
 through the elders. The command was given sufficiently before the 10th,
 in time for it to be published. This would not be long, (1.) As they all
 lived in one district; (2.) As by this time, in view of their departure,
 means of communication were doubtless organized. . . . *lamb*, or kid (*v.* 5).
 4 *too little*, i. e. to eat the whole of it (*v.* 10; xxiii. 18; xxxiv. 25), each
 5 having a piece ab. size of an olive. . . . *blemish* (Lev. xxii. 19—21; Mal.
 6 i. 8, 14; Heb. ix. 14; 1 Pet. i. 19). . . . *keep it*, till the proper time
 7 comes. . . . *evening* = between the two evenings (xvi. 12). . . . *strike* (*v.*
 8 22). . . . *bitter herbs*. They were to eat it as a religious duty, not to
 satisfy a carnal taste. A little would be enough for each. The last bitter
 meal in Egypt. A perpetual memorial of the bitterness they had suffered.
 9 *Eat not*, &c. Special directions, requiring special obedience, exercising
 10 special faith. . . . *nothing*, &c. To do so would express a doubt of their
 11 departure. . . . *loins girded*, as men about to set out (1 Pet. i. 13). . . .
 12 *this night*, of the 14th, now pointed to. . . . *smite* (xi. 4, 5; Amos v. 17).
gods (or princes), demonstrate their inability to protect and save (less. 53).
 13 *judgment*, they having so long oppressed. . . . *token* = a sign of presence.
 14 *pass over*, hence passover. . . . *memorial*. His mercies to be had in ever-
 lasting remembrance. . . . *ordinance* . *ever*. Till Christ, our passover,
 15 should be sacrificed for us (1 Cor. v. 7). . . . *Seven*, &c. Here follows the
 ordinance. . . . *unleavened*: bread made without fermenting matter. See
v. 34, feast of unleavened bread in remembrance of this. . . . *cut* . *Israel*,
 as unworthy of the nation, whose great right in this neglect was slighted.
 16 *first day*, of the seven of the feast. . . . *holy convocation*, an assembly for
 17 sacred purposes. . . . *observe*, keep (Ps. cvii. 43; Deut. vi. 25). . . . *for*,
 18 this reason. . . . *first month*. This month *Nisan* now and henceforth to
 19 be the first of the sacred year (Lev. xxiii. 5; Num. xxviii. 16). . . . *Seven*
days. Again with much emphasis is the ordinance enforced. . . . *cut off*
 (Num. ix. 13). . . . *stranger*, whether a proselyte or a born Israelite. . . .
 20 *habitations*, dwellings, houses, or tents, &c., wherever they may be. . . .
 21 *Then Moses*, having received this command (*vv.* 3—20). . . . *elders*, through
 22 whom it was to be communicated to Israel. . . . *Draw out*, select (Num.
 ix. 4; Jos. v. 10; 2 Ki. xxiii. 21; Ezra vi. 20; Mat. xxvi. 18, 19). . . .
hyssop, the caper plant (*Capparis Spinosa*), named nine times in Old Test.,
 and twice in New. Small plant. Grew in stony places (1 Ki. iv. 33).
 Believed to have cleansing properties (Ps. li. 7). Used at crucifixion (Jo.
 xix. 29). . . . *bason*: over which the lamb was slain. . . . *lintel*, upper part
 23 of frame-work of door. . . . *destroyer* (2 Sam. xxiv. 16; 1 Cor. x. 10;
 24 Heb. ix. 19; xi. 28). . . . *thee* . *sons* = from generation to generation. . . .
 25 *come* . *land*: which you certainly shall, not because you deserve it, but
 26 because God hath promised it. . . . *children* . *say* (xiii. 8, 14; Deut. vi. 7,
 27 20—25; xxxii. 7; Josh. iv. 6; Ps. lxxviii. 6; Is. xxxviii. 19). . . . *ye*
shall say: shall not put them off, but patiently enter into an explanation
 of these things, and their reason; magnifying the goodness of the Lord.
people, acquiesced in the command.

Obedience—Faith—Humiliation—Deliverance.

HEBREW MONTHS.—Civil, VII. = (1.) Sacred, *Nisan* or *Abib* (Neh. ii. 1); Mar. or Apr.—VIII. = (2.) *Zif* (1 Ki. vi. 1); Apr. or May.—IX. = (3.) *Sivan* (Esther viii. 9); May or June.—X. = (4.) *Tammuz*; June or July.—XI. = (5.) *Ab*; July or Aug.—XII. = (6.) *Elul* (Neh. vi. 15); Aug. or Sep.—I. = (7.) *Tirshi* or *Ethanim* (1 Ki. viii. 2); Sep. or Oct.—II. = (8.) *Bul* (1 Ki. vi. 38); Oct. or Nov.—III. = (9.) *Kisleu* (Neh. i. 1); Nov. or Dec.—IV. = (10.) *Tebeth* (Esth. ii. 16); Dec. or Jan.—V. = (11.) *Shebat* (Zech. i. 7); Jan. or Feb.—VI. = (12.) *Adar* (Esth. iii. 7); Feb. or Mar.

BIBLE NIGHT SCENES. *New Test.*—Philippian jailor converted,—Apostle Peter delivered,—Paul, on the deep, wished for the day,—Paul escaped from Damascus,—Jesus betrayed,—Walking on the waters,—Interview with Nicodemus,—Flight of Holy family,—Angels app. to shepherds, and star to wise men. *Old Test.*—Sodom destroyed,—Daniel, lions' den,—Jacob's ladder,—King Ahasuerus read history,—David killed lion and bear,—Samuel called,—Assyrian host slain,—Belshazzar slain, &c.—Night of the Passover, a night to be observed unto the Lord (Ex. xii. 42). Perhaps the most memorable of the night scenes of the Bible. Things to be remembered concerning it:—

- I. OBEDIENCE. Lamb to be killed, prepared, eaten. None to be left till morning. Eaten in a certain form and manner. All were to be ready to depart. Christ, the lamb, slain for us, to be received as a whole. His *yoke*, his cross, as well as his crown. Example. Redeemer. Righteousness.
- II. FAITH. More reasonable that they should shed the blood of their enemies than of the lamb, and use the sword than the knife. Spreading fire and slaughter. More reasonable, apparently, to help and trust themselves, than confide in a word spoken, and a few drops of blood on the door-post. Our faith, and Jesus the Lamb.

"Paschal Lamb by God appointed,
All our sins on thee were laid:
By Almighty love anointed,
Thou hast full atonement made.

All thy people are forgiven,
Through the virtue of thy blood:
Opened is the gate of heaven,
Peace is made for man with God."

(Bakewell.)

- III. HUMILIATION. Eaten with bitter herbs. Penitential recollections. They prevented mere carnal delight in the feast. *Our* bitter herbs: remembrance of sin; of our condition; of our prospects, &c.
- IV. DELIVERANCE. Last night in Egypt. The blood sprinkled. The destroying angel. First-born of Egypt. Chief of strength in tabernacles of Ham. Midnight cry. Door of every Israelite's home opens, and the family comes out. Egypt occupied with caring for, and embalming the dead. The escape.

LEARN—

- I. That God gives songs in the night. "In darkest shades, if Thou appear."—(Watts.)
- II. That Christ *our* passover was slain for *us* (1 Cor. v. 7).
- III. That we should receive him with all humility, obedience, and faith.
- IV. That trusting in him, we shall have a great deliverance.

B.C. 1491. Ex. xiv. 10—31.

- 10 *drew nigh*, to the Israelitish encampment (v. 9). . . . *lifted . eyes*. They would be able to see them a long way off. Probably, as it was evening, Pharaoh marshalled his forces about the Israelites, intending to attack in the morning. He would be satisfied that Israel could not escape with the sea before them, and might wait the arrival of more troops. . . . *cried out*
- 11 (Ps. xxxvii. 17; cvii. 6). . . . *And they said* (Ps. cvii. 7, 8). By means of
- 12 their elders they would say this. . . . *word . tell . Egypt* (v. 21; vi. 9). *better* : to any but such craven spirits the opposite would be better. . . .
- 13 *Moses*. His heart being fixed, trusting in the Lord. . . . *Fear . not* (2 Ch. xx. 15, 17; Is. xli. 10—14). . . . *salvation . Lord*. Like us, they could not save themselves (Is. lxiii. 5; Jer. iii. 23; Lam. iii. 26). . . . *shew* :
- 14 for it shall be an open and most manifest salvation. . . . *Lord . fight*. Man of war. God of battles. Lord of hosts. . . . *hold . peace*, from com-
- 15 plaining or advising (Is. xxx. 15). . . . *go forward*. But there was the sea ! Yet if the difficulty was plain, so was the duty. Strong faith. Pure
- 16 obedience. . . . *lift . rod* : now become the sceptre of omnipotence. . . . *divide it*. Trial of Moses' faith. . . . *shall go*. Promise added to com-
- 17 mand. . . . *harden* (less. 54). . . . *honour*. Make me "a name as at this
- 18 day" (Neh. ix. 10), that all the kings of the earth may fear him. . . . *shall*
- 19 *know*, what they were long in learning. . . . *angel . God*, i. e. the pillar of cloud (Is. lviii. 8, 9). . . . *behind*. Thus hid them from the Egyptians.
- 20 *darkness . them*, i. e. Egyptians. . . . *light . these*, i. e. Israelites (Is. viii. 14;
- 21 2 Cor. iv. 3). . . . *And Moses* : while they were thus divided. . . . *east wind*, or *previous wind*. The w. blew first to clear the passage, otherwise they would have to march in the teeth of this strong w. . . . *divided*, cut in two, not merely beaten back, as if a strong ebb tide. . . . *children . through*.
- 22 Moses and Aaron probably going first, to inspire faith and courage; and lead the way. . . . *wall . right . left*. Hence it was not by the sand at low water, but by a miracle that the waters were cloven (Hab. iii. 10).
- 23 *pursued*. Probably in the morning twilight, when they discovered the
- 24 prey had escaped (Ps. lxxvii. 17—20). . . . *morning watch* (Ps. xc. 4). These originally 3 : "*beginning of w.*" (Lam. ii. 19); *middle w.* = sunset —10 o'clock (Jud. vii. 19); *morning w.* = 10—2 (1 Sam. xi. 11). In after times 4 : *even* = 6—9; *midnight* = 9—12; *cock-crowing* = 12—3; *morning* = 3—6. . . . *troubled*, perplexed. . . . *chariot wheels*. He made
- 25 it hard driving in the rough rocky bed of the sea. . . . *flee*. He "turned to flight the army of the aliens" (Heb. xi. 34). . . . *fighteth*. He had done so all along. Strange blindness not to see this before (Eph. iv. 18).
- 26 *Stretch*, &c. "Know that the Lord is God alone, He can create, and he
- 27 destroy." . . . *returned* (Josh. iv. 18). . . . *strength*. The Lord's "waves and billows," and "stormy wind fulfilling his word." . . . *overthrew*
- 28 (Deut. xi. 4; Neh. ix. 11; Ps. lxxviii. 53; Heb. xi. 29). . . . *covered* (Ps. cvi. 11). . . . *not . one*, to either harass the Israelites, or tell the story of
- 29 their memorable overthrow. . . . *walked* (Is. xxxv. 8), safely and untroubled. . . . *dry land . midst . sea*. A great wonder. Former miracles had discomfited Egypt, this also saved Israel. . . . *wall*, &c. The supernatural
- 30 again insisted upon. . . . *saw* (Ps. lviii. 10; lix. 10). They *saw* instead
- 31 the salvation of God, as Moses had promised them (v. 13). . . . *Israel saw*. Instead of the Egyptians in pursuit. . . . *feared*, at this time. Alas! they soon forgot him. . . . *believed* : but they soon doubted. . . . *Moses*, against whom they were soon to complain (Ex. xxxii. 1; iv. 31; xix. 9).

The Flight—the Pursuit—the Command—the Lessons.

- I. THE FLIGHT. During the time occupied with the plagues that afflicted Egypt, Israel was under supervision and training for the end. Frequent communications from Moses, through the elders, to the people. The flight organized. The death of the first-born afforded time. While Egypt was embalming, &c., its dead, Israel made his escape. When Egypt turned from domestic sorrow to public affairs, behold the bondmen were gone ; but their course was towards the Red Sea.
- II. THE PURSUIT. It was predicted and prepared for (v. 4). Discovery of the flight. Muster of the troops and chariots. Stimulated by rage excited by their losses, they set out. The track of the flight easily discovered. The vast camp of Israel seen dotting the shores of the sea and enclosed by mountains. Their conquest certain and easy. Egypt anticipates a great triumph, and prepares for the attack.
- III. THE COMMAND. Israel's consternation and complaint. The Lord's word to Moses, and Moses' to the people. "*Go forward!*" But the sea? They set out. The waters divide. They pass through and are saved (Is. li. 10). Destruction of Egypt. Miriam's song.

"Sound the loud timbrel o'er Egypt's dark sea," &c.

"Daughter of Zion, awake from thy sadness,
 Awake ! for thy foes shall oppress thee no more ;
 Bright on the hills dawns the day-star of gladness,
 Arise, for the weight of thy sorrow is o'er.
 Strong were thy foes, but the arm that subdued them,
 And scattered their legions, was mightier far ;
 Vain were their steeds, for the scourge that pursued them,
 O'ertook and destroyed all their chariots of war.
 Daughter of Zion,—the power that hath saved thee,
 Extoll'd with the harp and the timbrel should be :
 Shout ! for the foe is destroyed that enslaved thee,
 The oppressor is vanquished, and Zion is free.

Daughter of Zion, awake from thy sadness,
 Awake ! for thy foes shall oppress thee no more."

- IV. THE LESSONS. We must "go forward." (1.) In the way of repentance. (2.) In the way of faith. (3.) In the discharge of Christian duties. (4.) In the cultivation of Christian graces. (5.) In the way that Providence has appointed. (6.) In union with all who are travelling to heaven. (7.) Through trial and discipline. (8.) And continue to "go forward" to the end of our days. (9.) Obedient to the word of God.

"Whom should we love like thee."—(*Lyte*.)

B.C. 1491. Ex. xv. 20—27.

- 20 *And*: Israel being delivered thus miraculously. . . . *Miriam*: being now at least 90 years of age. . . . *prophetess* (Judg. iv. 4; 1 Sam. x. 5): for she also received divine communications (Num. xii. 1; Mic. vi. 4). But the word prophesy is sometimes applied to musical skill (1 Ch. xxv. 1; 1 Cor. xiii. 1). . . . *sister*. *Aaron* (Num. xxiv. 59). . . . *timbrel*, musical instrument of percussion (Jud. xi. 34; 2 Sam. vi. 5; 1 Ch. xiii. 8; Job xxi. 12), a kind of tambourine. Known early (Gen. xxxi. 27; less. 27). Used in seasons of joy (Is. xxiv. 8). Generally played by females, and accompanied by dancing. Still used by Arabs, and called by them, *doff*; and by Spaniards, *aduffa*. . . . *dancees*: expression of happy feeling by bodily gestures (Ps. xxxv. 10), used in religious festivals (2 Sam. vi. 14. See also 1 Sam. xviii. 6; Ps. lxxviii. 25). . . . *answered*, taking up the chorus of their song (1 Sam. xviii. 7). . . . *Sing*, &c. (see v. 1). This condensed summary of the whole song, was sung by Miriam as a refrain. . . . *to*.
- 22 *Lord*. They acknowledge him as the author of their deliverance. . . . *So Moses*, commanded and instructed by the Lord. . . . *from*. *Red Sea*. Various reasons for the name: (1.) Colour of western shores; (2.) Its red coral; (3.) Red appearance of water occasioned by certain zoophytes; (4.) sea of Edom=red; (5.) Because the Hunyarc tribes of S. Arabia bear a name implying red, hence so called from these red men. 1400 m. long, 200 in greatest width, area 180,000 m. Towards the N. it divides into 2 gulfs; the extremities of which are about 200 m. apart. The W. gulf of Suez; the E. g. of Akabah. The passage was made near the N. end of g. of Suez. The triangular tongue of land (full of mountains, including Sinai and Horeb, &c.) between these two gulfs was the scene of the wanderings for 40 years. The N. part of this district was called . . . *the wilderness of Shur* (Gen. xvi. 7; xxv. 18). In the direct route for the promised land. . . . *three days*: some 50 or 60 m. . . . *no water*; without
- 23 which they could not safely travel with their flocks, &c. . . . *Marah* (=bitterness), perhaps the modern 'Ain Hovârah, where is still a salt and bitter fountain (Num. xxxiii. 8). . . . *not drink*, although so faint and
- 24 thirsty. . . . *murmured*. This they often did if things went wrong, and were not very grateful when all went well. . . . *against Moses*. As if the bitterness were his fault, or as if he could create water. Public persons
- 25 are often undeservedly blamed (xvi. 2; xvii. 3). . . . *he cried*. *Lord*. He made the Lord his refuge in every time of need (xiv. 10; xvii. 4; Ps. l. 15). . . . *a tree*. "A type of Christ's sweet cross and easy yoke, that sweeteneth and facilitateth all our light afflictions" (*Trapp*). What trial is so bitter that Christ, our "branch" (Zech. iii. 8; vi. 12), and "plant of renown" (Eze. xxxiv. 29), springing from the root of Jesse (Is. xi. 10; Ro. xv. 12), will not sweeten? . . . *made sweet* (2 Ki. ii. 21; iv. 41). . . . *made* (Josh. xxiv. 25). . . . *statute*, &c. (v. 26). . . . *proved* (xvi. 4; Deut. viii. 2, 16; Jud. ii. 22; Ps. xlv. 10; lxxxi. 7). . . . *said* (Deut. vii. 12, 15). . . . *diligently*, learning in order to obey more perfectly. . . . *none*. *diseases*. Perfect holiness the best preventative of trial. Sin makes necessary the discipline of suffering. . . . *healeth* (xxiii. 25; Ps. xli. 3, 4; ciii. 3; cxlvii. 3). He is the good physician. . . . *Elim* (=trees), prob. *Wady Ghurundel*, which contains trees and shrubs, and the wild palm (*S. S. P.* 37, 67). . . . *twelve wells*, or fountains. . . . *seventy palms*, the date palm (*Phoenix dactylifera*). We hear of their murmuring (v. 24), but not of their thanksgiving; though *Heber* says:—"Then, soft as Elim's well," &c.

 Marah and Elim.

“ Though rugged their way, they drink as they go
 Of springs that convey new life as they flow :
 The God they rely on their strength shall renew,
 Till each brought to Zion, his glory shall view.”—(Conder.)

I. THE WATERS AT MARAH. The three days' march in the wilderness without water. The water-skins all exhausted. Water at last! (1.) *The people's joy.* They prepare to replenish their bottles; and water their thirsty cattle. They cluster round the stream. (2.) *The people's disappointment.* Bitter water. The cattle will not drink. The people cannot. Murmuring. (3.) *The people's lesson.* Water only a blessing and refreshment as God is obeyed, and then even bitter waters become sweet. Thus the bitter waters of life are sweetened for us. (1.) *Of affliction.* Christ, the branch, causes them “to work in us,” &c. (2.) *Of repentance.* Christ comforts the heart with the hope and assurance of pardon. (3.) *Of bereavement.* Christ the resurrection and the life. (4.) *Of death.* Christ our Saviour the conqueror of the King of Terrors. Bitter water he makes sweet; and good water he turns into wine. Thus he assuages our sorrow, and increases our joys.

“ Heal us, Immanuel! we are here,
 Waiting to feel thy touch :
 Deep wounded souls to thee repair,
 And, Saviour, we are such.”—(Cowper.)

II. THE WELLS OF ELIM. (1.) *The end of a weary march.* The end so joyous, that the march undescribed. The trees and river of life in heaven, where we shall encamp for ever, will make us forget the trials of the way. (2.) *The scene of pleasant intercourse.* Here they would talk of God's goodness. So do we, by wells of salvation in the sanctuary. “We hear of heaven, and learn the way.” (3.) *The remembrance of an instructive contrast.* Here they were free who once were slaves; and happy, whose lives were bitter. Elim and Egypt. (4.) *A stimulant to increased exertion.* Elim not Canaan. What must be the land flowing with milk and honey, if God could give such springs in the desert? Twelve wells. (1.) *Safety.* Away from Egypt. (2.) *Peace.* Enemies overthrown. (3.) *Union.* Not a hoof left behind. (4.) *Intercourse.* About holy things. (5.) *Refreshment.* Rest, and water. (6.) *Health* of body and mind. (7.) *Joy.* Position and prospects. (8.) *Protection.* Overshadowed from the heat by palms. (9.) *Gratitude.* They remember all the way. (10.) *Content.* All wants supplied. (11.) *Hope.* He who had done so much would complete his work. (12.) *Faith.* By which they must walk, and not by sight.

LEARN—

- I. To seek the presence of the Branch to sweeten our sorrows.
- II. To rejoice in his presence in the midst of our joys.

B.C. 1491. Ex. xvi. 11—36.

- 11,12 *spake*. *Moses*: and through him to the people. . . . *heard*. *murmurings* (v. 8). Their cry also, but seldom heard praise. . . . *even* = evening (A.S. *æfan*). . . . *flesh*, quails. . . . *bread*, manna. . . . *ye*. *know*. They might have known this already. They had known his power, they were now
- 13 learning his mercy, presently they would learn his anger. . . . *to pass*, as it was promised. . . . *quails* (less. 70). . . . *dew* (Num. xi. 9). The earth, at night, gives off heat by radiation. It thus becomes colder than the air near the surface. The moisture in the air is then deposited in small drops. These drops are called dew (Deut. xxxii. 2; Hos. xiv. 5). . . .
- 14 *small*. *thing*. Yet of how *great* use. . . . *hoar* = white (A.S. *hár*), hence
- 15 hoary-head, &c. . . . *said*, in astonishment. . . . *It is manna*: lit. they said to each other, "*What is this?*" None could say what it was. Hence it had no proper name. So they called it by the word they all uttered in inquiry and surprise:—'*manna*'? = What is this? . . . *wist* = knew (A.S. *witan*, to know). . . . *Moses said*: could not name it, but described its use (Jo. vi. 31, 49, 58; 1 Cor. x. 3). . . . *This*, that I am about to say. . . . *eating*: his need of food. . . . *omer* (= a handful); in
- 17 pints an o. = 5·1. . . . *gathered*, each as much as he could, and put it into
- 18 a common receptacle for each household. . . . *mete* = measure (A.S. *metan*). . . . *much*, anxiously, or greedily. . . . *little*, through want of skill or imperfect vision. . . . *lack* = want (A.S. *lecan*, to diminish), (2 Cor. viii.
- 19 15). . . . *leave*. *morning*, as doubting the next day's supply (Mat. vi. 25—
- 20 34). . . . *hearkened not*. Thought they were wiser than their teacher. . . . *left*. *it*, to save the trouble of collecting, or fearing there might be none. *bred worms*. Blessings abused, may become curses. . . . *uroth*. This meek man! (Eph. iv. 26.) How great the sin that could stir such
- 21 anger! . . . *melted*: to compel daily labour and trust. The absence of solidity will account for the great quantity that each one needed. . . .
- 22 *gathered twice*, for so it was predicted (v. 5). Without a special command, they seem now to have seen that it was right to do so. . . . *rulers*,
- 23 not knowing the prediction. . . . *To-morrow*. *sabbath*. A miracle, wrought to save the sabbath from desecration, must have impressed them with the
- 24 sanctity of the day. . . . *scethe* = boil (A.S. *scóthan*). . . . *not stink*. A daily miracle in giving, and weekly m. in preserving and withholding. . . .
- 25,26 *Eat*. *day*. It is fresh and fit to eat. . . . *none*. The giver will rest from giving, as the receiver from collecting. Giving would have tempted
- 27 to gather (Jas. i. 13). . . . *some*, of sceptical mind, having no regard for the day, and who had not made a proper provision: who regarded it as a natural and not a miraculous gift. . . . *none*: and paid the penalty by fast-
- 28,29 *ing*. . . . *refuse* (2 Ki. xvii. 14; Ps. lxxviii. 10, 22; cvi. 13). . . . *there-*
- 30 *fore*, to teach the holiness of the sabbath. . . . *place*, tent. . . . *rested*, from
- 31 labour. . . . *Manna*. Familiar use could not discover its real nature. The name = "What is it?" an admission of their ignorance. . . . *like*, in shape. *coriander*, one of the umbelliferous family (*Coriandrum sativum*). . . . *seeds*: still used as a condiment in the East. They are cultivated in Essex, and—coated with sugar—are sold as a confection. . . . *white*: the c.
- 32 seed being grey. . . . *wafers*, thin cakes. . . . *this*, also. . . . *omer*: in remembrance of each man's daily allowance. . . . *generations*, posterity. *see*, and not forget past mercies. . . . *fed*. *wilderness*, where but for this
- 33 miracle they would have starved. . . . *pot*, covered vessel, of earthenware.
- 34 *lay*. *up*, in the ark (Heb. ix. 4). . . . *Testimony*, tables of the law.

Divine Care—Human Duty—Spiritual Instruction.

- I. DIVINE CARE. (1.) Anticipating human need. He was *before* them in the way ; to turn "the barren wilderness" into "a fruitful field." (2.) Providing a suitable supply. (*a.*) Suitable to their bodily need. Pleasant to the taste. Nourishing. (*b.*) Suited to a wandering life. No time to sow and reap, even had the soil permitted. (3.) Furnishing a sufficient supply. Day by day ; for forty years. (4.) Watching over spiritual interests in meeting physical need. The Sabbath guarded. Both body and soul cared for ; and at the same time.
- II. HUMAN DUTY. (1.) To expect. Eyes of all wait on him. The manna to be looked for. We are to expect that God will supply our wants. He has promised to do so. (2.) To collect. This work might have been saved them (*ill.* widow of Sarepta). It had its use. Some collect for others. Young for aged, &c. All secular labour in fields or factories, but a collecting of the good gifts of God. So is prayer, study of Bible, &c. (3.) To economize. None to be wasted. Those who had gathered less were to be supplied out of another's abundance. A wise distribution of our good things is true economy. Sowing for eternity.
- III. SPIRITUAL INSTRUCTION. The manna a type of Christ. So Jesus himself regarded it (Jo. vi). It was so (1.) Because unexpected in its coming. (2.) Came in time of great need. (3.) Unostentatious in its form. (4.) Pleasant to the taste. (5.) Spread silently over the ground. (6.) Lasted all the journey through. (7.) The remembrance of it treasured for ever. (8.) Mysterious in nature. "*What is it ?*" com. with "*Who is he ?*" "Great is the mystery of godliness," &c. While curious minds are trying to understand a mystery into which angels *desire* to look, let our exhortation be "O taste and see that the Lord is good," &c.

"Day by day the manna fell ; Oh, to learn this lesson well,
Still by constant mercy fed ; Give me, Lord, my daily bread.
Day by day, the promise reads ; Daily strength for daily needs :
Cast foreboding fears away ; Take the manna of to-day."—(*Conder.*)

"Guide me, O thou great Jehovah !
Pilgrim through this barren land ;
I am weak, but thou art mighty,
Hold me with thy powerful hand :
Bread of heaven !
Feed me till I want no more."—(*Williams.*)

LEARN—

- I. To trust in the care of Providence.
- II. To act in harmony with Providence.
- III. To seek the true bread of life.

B.C. 1491. Ex. xvii. 1—16.

- 1 congregation, society (Lat. *grex*, *grægis*, a flock, Ps. lxxvii. 20). . . . wilderness. *Sin*. Prob. the district now called *El Kâa* on the SW. border of the Sinaitic peninsula. . . . after . journeys, through this wilderness. commandment, indicated by the pillar of cloud and fire. . . . *Rephidim*, nr. to Horeb. Precise locality uncertain (*Wady es-Sheikh*, R. B. R. i. 121; *Wady Feiran*, S. S. P. 40). It was doubtless among the defiles of the
- 2 mountains of Sinai. . . . chide. *Moses*. Now for water, the last time for bread. . . . tempt (Deut. vi. 16; Ps. lxxviii. 18, 41; Is. vii. 12; Mat. iv. 7; 1 Cor. x. 9). . . . thirsted (Mat. v. 6). . . . murmured. *Moses*: as usual (xvi. 2). . . . to kill. thirst? They charged him before with intending to kill them with hunger (xvi. 3). . . . cried. *Lord*. The people to *Moses*, and *Moses* to God (xiv. 15). . . . stone (1 Sam. xxx. 6; Jo. viii. 59; x. 32). . . . Go. before (Ez. ii. 6). . . . take. elders. As witnesses. They would afterwards describe the scene to the people. . . . smotest. river: in that case to change good water into blood, now to make good
- 6 water flow. . . . Behold (Num. xx. 10, 11; Ps. lxxviii. 15, 20; cv. 41; 1 Cor. x. 4). . . . stand. rock. "If God had not stood upon it, in vain
- 7 had *Moses* struck it." . . . Massah = temptation (Num. xx. 13; Ps. lxxxi. 7; xcv. 8; Heb. iii. 8). . . . Meribah = chiding or strife. . . . Is, &c. ? As
- 8 if their thirst proved his absence (Ps. xxxi. 7). . . . Then. By this time the camp was partially organized. . . . Amalek (= a people that licks up?) descended from Esau (Gen. xxxvi. 12, 16; 1 Ch. i. 36). A nomad people, rich in flocks and herds. Destruction of A. predicted by Balaam (Num. xxiv. 20; com. 1 Sam. xv.). Agag, the general title of their chief. . . .
- 9 Joshua = saviour, or Jehovah the salvation (Heb. = Jesus, in Greek), called Jesus, Ac. vii. 45 (Heb. iv. 8), s. of Nun; tribe of Ephraim. Orig. Oshea, changed to Jehoshua, cont. = Joshua, (Num. xiii. 16; 1 Ch. vii. 27). This the first mention of his name. . . . choose. *Moses* must have had great confidence in J. . . . top. hill, place of prayer, and observation.
- 10 rod. God. Not Joshua, but God, would give the victory. . . . Hur (= cavern). The Jews believe him to be Miriam's husband. Called
- 11 father of Bethlehem (1 Ch. iv. 4). . . . held. hand, and the rod also (Jas. 12 v. 16). Praying to God as he did so. . . . heavy, wearied. God's hand is stretched out still; but our flesh is weak, even when the spirit is willing. . . . stayed = supported. Aaron, Hur, and all Israel constantly learn their dependence upon *Moses* as God's representative (iv. 16). . . .
- 13 discomfited, broke up, scattered. . . . edge. sword, i. e. worsted him in the battle. What the weapons that Israel fought with we know not. He
- 14 who was with them more than all against them. . . . Write. This was the first great battle of Israel after the Exod. A pledge of future victories. memorial, historical record, or remembrance. . . . book, tablet, roll, prob. skin of some animal, or thin piece of stone. . . . rehearse = recite (Fr. *reheuser*, to harrow over again). . . . ears. Joshua, for his encouragement. Already honour is given to him in the presence of the people. Thus early the way is prepared for his future pre-eminence. . . . put out, &c. (Num. xxiv. 20; Deut. xxv. 19; 1 Sam. xv. 3, 7; xxx. 1, 17; 2 Sam. viii. 12; Eze. ix. 14). . . . altar, to offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the real author of the victory. . . . Jehovah-nissi = The Lord my banner. He leads the victory. Happy the man who fights under this banner. . . .
- 16 Because, &c. See marg. "Who hath fought against God and prospered?" S. J. C. i. 144.

 Historical Fact—Religious Duty—Pious Sentiment.

“They thirst, and waters from the rock, In rich abundance flow ;
 And following still the course they took, Ran all the desert through.
 O wondrous stream ! O blessed type ! Of overflowing grace ;
 So Christ, our rock, maintains our life Through all this wilderness.”

(Watts.)

Jehovah-jireh (The Lord will provide). *Jehovah-Shalom* (The Lord will send peace). *Jehovah Nissi* (The Lord my banner). Names of three altars erected by Abraham, Gideon, and Moses. *Com.* with Athenian altar “to the unknown God.” Our *known* God, is the great *provider*, who sends us *peace*, by lifting up a *standard* against our enemies.

- I. THE ALTAR A MEMORIAL OF AN HISTORIC FACT. Great battle of Rephidim. One of the most remarkable. Character of the combatants ; stubbornness of encounter ; uncertainty of the result ; decisiveness of victory. The enemy—crafty, cruel, cowardly,—attacked the rear where were the young, aged, women, &c. (Deut. xxv. 17, 18). Israelites unarmed, unused to warfare. Taken by surprise in the rear. They could succeed only by the help of God. The help was given.
- II. THIS ALTAR A RECORD OF RELIGIOUS DUTY. (1.) The duty of diligently using the means at hand in doing our proper and appointed work. Moses chose the general. Joshua chose the fittest men. The men chose their weapons. (2.) The duty of encouraging those who may be in peculiar danger. Moses to Joshua (*v.* 9). (3.) The duty of rendering willing sympathy and aid. Israel hastening to the rescue of the feeble, &c., who were attacked.
- III. THIS ALTAR AN EXPRESSION OF PIOUS SENTIMENTS. (1.) Of *Faith*. Flushed with success, remembering much individual prowess, they acknowledge that their victory was from another source. (2.) Of *Gratitude*. The altar left behind would teach all desert travellers to trust in the Lord. (3.) *Resolution for the future*. They would only fight for the right, and under this banner. We too have a banner (Is. xi. 10). Must be united (Is. xi. 12, 13), and rally round it (Ps. lx. 4 ; Song, ii. 4).

“Stand up, stand up for Jesus, ye soldiers of the cross,
 Lift high his royal banner, it must not suffer loss !
 From victory unto victory, his army shall he lead,
 Till every foe is vanquished, and Christ is Lord indeed.
 Stand up, stand up for Jesus ! The strife will not be long ;
 This day the noise of battle, the next the victor’s song :
 To him that overcometh, a crown of life shall be ;
 He with the King of Glory shall reign eternally.”—(*Duffield.*)

LEARN—

- I. That God gives refreshment by the way.
- II. That he gives help in the conflict.
- III. That he gives victory in the end.

B.C. 1491. Ex. xviii. 1—27.

- 1 *Jethro* (less. 50). . . . *heard*, as living in some part of that region he soon would do. . . . *God . done*. God was the real *doer* (Ps. xl. 1; lxxvii. 14, 2 15; lxxviii. 4; cv. 5, 43; cvi. 2, 8). . . . *Zipporah* (less. 50). . . . *sent* 3,4 *back* (iv. 26). . . . *two sons* (Ac. vii. 29). . . . *Eliczer* (= God his help, 1 5 Ch. xxiii. 15, 17; xxvi. 25). . . . *came*, to congratulate. The light of family respect springing up for Moses, in the midst of the darkness of the mur- 6 murings, &c., of Israel. . . . *Mount . God* (iii. 1, 12). . . . *said* = sent 7 word. . . . *Moses*, glad to hear of his relatives. . . . *obeisance*. They met in the usual ceremonious manner of the East. . . . *asked each other* (*Lectures by John Foster*, ii. 179). Greetings of friends. . . . *welfare* 8 (*lit. peace*), especially their highest welfare (2 Sam. xi. 7). . . . *told*: how great the wonder of Jethro as the tale proceeded! . . . *travail*, labour, 9 including journeys and trials. . . . *way*, march. . . . *rejoiced* (Is. xli. 10). 10 Right to have joy in the prosperity of friends, and God's people. . . . *Blessed*. As a priest he pronounced a solemn benediction (Gen. xiv. 20; 2 Sam. 11 xviii. 28; Lu. i. 68). . . . *know*. By the past God intended this to be 12 known (2 Ch. ii. 5; Ps. xcv. 3). . . . *above them* (less. 53). . . . *sacrifices*: a religious festival closed this family meeting. . . . *eat bread*, hospitality. 13 *before God*, sincerity, without a *feigned* friendship. . . . *sat*, acc. to custom. *judge*, to weigh cases, decide disputes, issue commands. . . . *people*, 14 those especially whose awards were being made. . . . *alone*, as the sole 15 judge. . . . *come . me*: there being no other (Lev. xxiv. 12; Nu. xv. 34). 16 *of God*, whose spokesman Moses was. . . . *matter*, of difficulty or dispute (xxiii. 7; Deut. xvii. 8; Job xxxi. 13; Ac. xviii. 15; 1 Cor. vi. 1). . . . 17 *one . another*, between man and man. . . . *know . statutes . laws*. "To interpret and apply them to their several cases and circumstances" 18 (*Poole*). . . . *good*. Moses was doing too much of a good thing. This 19 can seldom be said of us. . . . *wear . away*, weary, wear thyself out. . . . 20 *people*: will tire with having to wait till their turn comes. . . . *God-ward*. In matters of great consequence, and chiefly moral and eccle- 21 siastical. . . . *bring* (Nu. xxvii. 5). . . . *ordinances*, ceremonial observ- 22 ances. . . . *laws*, moral, civil, ceremonial, &c. . . . *way . walk*. Life. They must live; opinions they must hold (Ps. cxliii. 8). . . . *work . do*, practical duties. . . . *provide*, select. . . . *able*, capable, right-hearted, and sound-minded. . . . *fear God*. The chief qualification for a judge. Such men will most respect human rights (Lu. xviii. 2). . . . *truth*: 23 lovers of truth in word and deed. . . . *covetousness* (Deut. xvi. 19; Col. iii. 5), and who therefore will not receive bribes from the rich. . . . 24 *rulers*, &c.: providing for complete supervision of affairs, and despatch of 25,26 business. . . . *all seasons*, at times, that there may be no needless delays. *great matter*, vital concerns in religion, &c. (Lev. xxiv. 11; Nu. xv. 33; Deut. i. 17). . . . *easier*. This the more desirable since Moses was aged. 27 *If*. Jethro only suggested. . . . *God command*, or approve, on thy submitting it to him. . . . *endure*, bear up under all thy toil. . . . *people*: it will be well also for them. . . . *hearkened*. Very humble this on the part of a man that was specially taught of God. . . . *and did all*: having obtained permission of God. The co-incidence between the mind of Jethro and the will of God is suggestive of Jethro being under divine influence in 25,26 giving this advice. . . . *Moses chose* (Deut. i. 15; Ac. vi. 5). . . . *they*, the rulers. . . . *hard causes* (Job xxix. 16). . . . *themselves*. Thus providence lightened the old man's burden.

The Giver, and the Receiver, of Advice.

- I. THE GIVER OF THIS ADVICE. Jethro. (1.) *An old man*. The father-in-law of Moses, who was now fully 80 years of age. Age has had experience of life. Time for observation. Old men have seen and noted causes of success and failure. Less likely than the young to give bad advice. Are less moved by passion. Taught by memory. Are near to eternity. (2.) *Thoughtful*. His advice shows his thoughtfulness. Thought founded on observation. He saw the labour of Moses, and the extent of the camp. Perceived that, with increasing numbers and causes of difference, these labours would increase; and at last break down the strength of one man. (3.) *Affectionate*. He was a relative of Moses. Looked kindly also on this great host of fugitives. Wished them all well. Near relatives, amongst those who are most anxious for our welfare. (4.) *Disinterested*. He had nothing to gain personally by giving it, save the satisfaction of his own mind and conscience. (What more disinterested than the advice of Sunday School Teachers to their scholars?) He afterwards left Moses and went back to his own people. (5.) *Pious*. Priest of Midian. Had a respect for the God of Israel. "Rejoice for all the goodness which the Lord had done to Israel" (*com. Ac. xi. 22—24*). The advice of men who fear God, who are men of prayer, and love the Bible, not to be slighted; it will be agreeable to the mind of God.
- II. THE RECEIVER OF THIS ADVICE. Moses. He did not slight Jethro's advice, although (1.) *He was in direct communication with God*. And we should respect the words of good men, although we have also the word of God. We have need to be reminded of words, precepts, and promises, that we may overlook; or of laws, &c., that we may not understand. (2.) *He had been eminently successful*. Such a man, if not humble, might have been very self-reliant; and have spurned the advice of another. Clever children often think themselves wiser than their teachers. Success makes some unmanageable and proud. Let such study this character. (3.) *He was himself an aged man*. Might have thought himself too old to be taught. As competent to give advice as Jethro. Inexperienced youth often puffed up by a little knowledge. The more one really knows the more one feels his ignorance. (4.) *He doubtless laid the advice he received before the Lord*. Jethro made this a condition (*v. 23*). Are we willing that the advice we give should be tested by the word of God? Do we so test the advice we receive? (5.) *He acted upon it, and benefited by doing so*. Much good advice is lost in this world. Evaded, though good, because of trouble, or indifference, or pride. The character of the adviser, or his opinion on other matters, made an excuse for neglecting his words. Will God excuse the neglecter?

LEARN—

- I. To do good, by *word* and *deed*, as we have opportunity, unto all men.
- II. To get good, from all men, as opportunity offers.

B.C. 1491. Ex. xx. 1—26.

- 1 *God spake*. Moses and others deputed to speak a great deal. But not this (Deut. v. 4, 12, 32, 33). He spoke directly, so distinctly as to be heard by the vast multitude in the surrounding valleys. . . . *these words*, the words of the covenant, or the ten words (xxxiv. 28; Deut. iv. 13; x. 4).
- 2 *I . Lord . God* (which any other speaking could hardly say) = Jehovah, thy God. . . . *brought, &c.*, with a mighty arm, proving I am God. . . . *thee*, proving I am *thy* God. . . . *bondage* = or servants. They were to be sons. Having reminded them of his *power*, and *mercy*, and their *relation*,
- 3 he proceeds with the "ten words." . . . *Thou* (2 Ki. xvii. 35; Jer. xxv. 6). . . . *gods*, to fear and serve. . . . *before me*, lit. beyond me = in addition to me. "By the side of me" (*Luther*). Not only prohibits idolatry,
- 4 but commands true worship. . . . *graven* (A.S. *grafan*, to dig), engraven, carved. . . . *image*, figure, whose form is imagined. . . . *likeness*, something in imitation of. . . . *bow*, pray to, or worship (Is. xlv. 15, 19). . . . *serve*, obey their imagined wishes. . . . *jealous*, incensed at rivalry. . . . *visiting*, in punishment. The sins of men often operate, naturally, many
- 6 years after they were first committed. . . . *showing*, mercy as clearly as
- 7 wrath. . . . *take*, mention, employ in familiar converse. . . . *in vain*, jests or oaths. . . . *not . guiltless* (Ps. xv. 4; Mat. v. 33): therefore not leave
- 8 unpunished. . . . *Remember*, in memory, affection, practice. . . . *sabbath*,
- 9 seventh day, for rest and worship. . . . *Six . labour*, not four or five. This
- 10 as much a command, as to rest, &c., on the sabbath. . . . *of Lord . God*, his own day. . . . *son . daughter*. Thy children shall be trained to respect the day. . . . *man-servant, &c.* Though resting themselves, they would be guilty if they made their servants work. . . . *cattle, &c.* (Prov. xii. 10).
- 11 *stranger*. Visitors must conform to this rule. . . . *For*: you have this
- 12 lofty example. . . . *Honour*, respect and obey (xxiii. 26; Lev. xix. 3; Deut. v. 16; Jer. xxxv. 7, 18, 19; Mat. xv. 4; xix. 19; Eph. vi. 2).
- 13 *days, &c.* "So long as the nation had obedient children it was assured of long life in Canaan." . . . *kill* (Deut. v. 17; Mat. v. 21; Ro. xiii. 9). Neither take away or endanger life, in act or desire. Sacredness of life. . . .
- 14 *adultery* (Deut. v. 18; Mat. v. 27). Sacredness of marriage. Protective
- 15 of chastity in thought and deed. . . . *steal* (Mat. xix. 18; Ro. xiii. 9; 1
- 16 Thess. iv. 6). Sacredness of property. . . . *false witness*, give wrong evidence in law, or spread wrong reports. Sacredness of truth and character.
- 17 *covet*, desire what is another's. Sacredness of content (Job xxxi. 9; Prov.
- 18 vi. 29; Jer. v. 8; Mat. v. 28). . . . *saw*: the solemn accompaniments of this voice. . . . *noise . trumpet* (Ac. vii. 52; Gal. iii. 19; Heb. ii. 2). . . .
- 19 *removed*, in fear. . . . *Speak thou*: yet they were not always obedient to his words. . . . *lest . die*. They need not fear if they purposed to obey.
- 20 *Fear not*, for your lives. . . . *prove*, test. . . . *fear . before*. That ye may
- 21 be filled with the fear of doing wrong. . . . *afar*: still fearing (Deut. v. 30; Heb. xii. 18—22). . . . *Moses . near*. Not without fear himself (xix.
- 22 16). . . . *darkness* (Ps. xvii. 2; Deut. v. 5; 2 Ki. viii. 12). . . . *that I*. Wondrous condescension! Important words. . . . *heaven*: the throne of
- 23 God (lxvi. 1). . . . *silver . gold*. The most precious of material things cannot be worthy of worship. Yet some worship silver and gold in another
- 24 form—money (Ez. xx. 39; Dan. v. 4; Zeph. i. 5). . . . *earth*, the simplest material. God is greater than the altar. By the progress of truth the earth is becoming one great altar. . . . *places*. They were not to choose
- 25 the place any more than the altar. . . . *stone*, not hewn.

Religion—Life—Character—Property.

- I. CONCERNING RELIGION. The Law protected the name, character, and prerogative of Deity. On the belief and worship of the one true God all religion rests. The first, second, and third commandments especially needed by a people who for many generations had dwelt in a heathen and idolatrous land. (i.) *About God*. (1.) There is only *one* God (unity of nature). (2.) No material image could represent this one true God (spirituality of Divine essence, Jo. iv. 24). (3.) God is to be hallowed and honoured, in thought and speech (his name not to be lightly spoken, Matt. vi. 9). Right ideas about God the corner-stone of religion, and of the nation. Conserve this, and the religion and manners of the nation would be secure. We must fully realize the position and antecedents of the Israelites if we would understand the nature and force of these simple laws. (ii.) *About the Sabbath*. A day needful to preserve the doctrine of unity, &c., of the Deity (*C. D. N. T.* 42, 45, 49, 50, 96, 102). The day as needful for our spiritual nature as other days for our material nature.
- II. CONCERNING LIFE. Human life very lightly esteemed among heathen peoples. The Israelites had seen the value set upon life by the Egyptian. They were to regard life as sacred. Hence the sixth commandment (*v.* 13). Compare the spirit of this law with the estimate of life in India, and especially in China, at this day. Possible effect of sudden death of the body on the salvation of the soul. The soul hurried unprepared into the presence of the Judge. Dis. between murder and justifiable homicide, or capital punishment.
- III. CONCERNING CHARACTER. (1.) Jealously guard the character of the home circle. Honour father and mother. Not only obey their commands, but by your own character command respect for them. Win honour for them. (2.) Bearing false witness includes, not only witnessing in court of justice, but in common conversation. The commandment is exceeding broad, and its spirit includes tale-bearing, slandering, back-biting, &c. (*Lev.* xix. 16). The seventh commandment may be classed under this category, and embraces all impurity of thought and speech.
- IV. CONCERNING PROPERTY. (1.) *Not steal*. Various methods of stealing. Defrauding by misrepresentation. Light weight, short measures, false balances. Some are dishonest in one way who would not be in another. (*III.* one will use a light weight who would not pick a pocket. One will appropriate a small thing who would think it a crime to take something more valuable, &c.) (2.) *Not even to covet*. This the first step towards theft. Yet we are to covet earnestly the best gifts. (*C. D. N. T.* 25.)

“The law by Moses came ;
But peace, and truth, and love
Were brought by Christ, a nobler name,
Descending from above.

Amidst the house of God
Their different works were done ;
Moses a faithful *servant* stood,
But Christ a faithful *Son*.”

LEARN—I. To honour and keep the commandments.

II. To observe the spirit as well as the letter.

B.C. 1491. Ex. xxx. 11—16.

- 12 *When*. This was *formally* accomplished some time *after*, when the tabernacle had been constructed and set up about a month (*com.* Ex. xl. 17 with Num. i. 1, 18). But since this atonement-money, paid at the taking of the census, was appropriated to the purpose of the building, it must therefore have been paid previously. It may be reasonably assumed that immediately after the command had been issued, respecting the building of the tabernacle and the contributions to be made for that purpose, the numbering was begun, and the atonement money collected; that then the tabernacle was built, and the ceremonial instituted; and after all this, the nation was enrolled on the basis of this provisional numbering, and thus the census was completed. . . . *sum*, total number, the census. The males of 20 years and upwards = 603,550. The same number is given Ex. xxxviii. 26 and Num. i. 46. Dr Colenso, assuming there were six months between, makes much of this. But really there were only 10 or 12 weeks between. And since the money collected before the tab. was built was a freewill offering, and all were anxious to give; may not those have been *provisionally* enrolled at the first who would come within the terms of the *formal* census afterwards? . . . *after* . *number*, Heb. = them that *are to be* numbered (see *marg.*). Does not this explain the difficulty? . . . *ransom*. "Expiation is to be traced to the idea that the object for which E. was to be made was thereby withdrawn from the view of the person to be won or reconciled. Applied thus on the supposition:—(1.) that the face of the person to be won was covered by the gift (Gen. xxxii. 21; 1 Sam. xii. 3), and (2.) that the guilt itself was covered (Ps. xxii. 1), or wiped away (Jer. xviii. 23), so far as the eye of God was concerned, as though it had had no existence, and the sinner was protected from punishment because of this covering" (Num. xxxi. 50; Job xxxiii. 24; Ps. xlix. 7; Mat. xx. 28; Mark x. 45; 1 Ti. ii. 6; 1 Pet. i. 18, 19). . . . *no plague*. See effect of David's neglect of this duty (2 Sam. xxiv. 2—15; 1 Ch. xxi. 12—27).
- 13 *passeth*; is reckoned. . . . *half* . *shekel* = 1s. 3½*d.* . . . *shekel* . *sanctuary* (=s. of holiness). The original s. of full weight as dis. from the current light, or worn, s. . . . *of* . *Lord*, the amount fixed *by* and offered *to* him. . . .
- 14 *Every one*. There shall be no exception on any pretence. Each has sinned. Each has a soul. . . . *from twenty*: not because that is the age at which moral responsibility begins, but because at that time a man might be presumed to have some property of his own. Each was to give for himself, and "able to get it, before he gave it." (For those who were younger, and having nothing of their own, the elders would otherwise have to give: 15 out of this, evil might arise, but see Ps. xlix. 7.) . . . *rich* . *not* . *more*. Either from pride, or from taking a wrong view of the offering. No more deference should be paid them than others. They ranked merely as souls, persons. . . . *poor* . *not* . *less*. They were spiritually, if not socially, on a level with the rich. The sum was so small that the poor could easily pay it; so small that pride might be humbled; so small that all might see that salvation was of grace. It was no equivalent for value received. . . .
- 16 *atonement* = at-one-ment, making *at one*, or at peace (Lev. xvii. 11; Num. xxxi. 50; 2 Sam. xxi. 3). . . . *memorial*, a perpetual poll-money, in token of homage and subjection to the Almighty. "A perpetual reminder of their expiation before the Lord, who would henceforth treat them as reconciled because of this payment" (*K. D.*)

D. B. N. S. ii. 59, 60. *L.* ii. 1205.

Divinely Appointed—Universally Enforced—Equally Distributed—
Mercifully Measured.

- I. DIVINELY APPOINTED. "*The Lord spake,*" &c. Who else had a right to speak on this matter? How would it have been had man spoken? Would not man have rather been silent, as thinking no ransom were needed; or if he had spoken, what had been the arrangement he had made? Would he have treated rich and poor alike? Would men have been satisfied with any human arrangement whatever? Would not the authority be suspected? If man might arrange it, who? why not every one for himself? No end of difficulty. God mercifully prevents confusion by himself speaking. So, in our case. "I have found a ransom."
- II. UNIVERSALLY ENFORCED. "*They shall give EVERY MAN a ransom for his soul.*" No moral man shall, in the pride of his self-righteousness, conclude that he needs no ransom; nor shall any vile sinner, in utter despair, conclude that a ransom will in his case be useless. The Pharisee humbled, and the publican encouraged. If there was a ransom for *every man*, does that indicate that, even under the Law, there was a possible salvation for every man? Only those excluded who neglected or refused to pay the ransom money. How much more is salvation possible for us! "He gave himself a ransom for all." How if we "neglect so great salvation"?
- III. EQUALLY DISTRIBUTED. "*The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less.*" There should be no excuse for misrepresenting their temporal position and worldly circumstances. They were taught that the soul, and not wealth, was the thing considered. The rich not to think himself of greater consequence than the poor. Men spiritually on one level. If the rich gave more and the poor less, the priest might be tempted to exalt the rich and despise the poor (Lev. xix. 15). The rich and the poor might be sundered by circumstances in the tent, but were on an equality in the Tabernacle. In the house of God the rich and poor meet together, &c. Each went with his half-shekel to him who respecteth not the person of any man.
- IV. MERCIFULLY MEASURED. "*An half-shekel shall be the offering of the Lord*" (notes, v. 13). A small sum. So small that even the poor could furnish it easily. Those who suggest that the poor were *made* to pay as much as the rich, should rather remember that the rich were *allowed* to pay as little as the poor; they should also bear in mind that this equality was connected with soul-money, because souls are equal. In other matters there was a difference (see Lev. v. 7; see *marg.*; Lev. xii. 8; xiv. 21, 22, 30, 31). The poor were always treated with special consideration. It was a mercy to the rich to humble him, and to the poor to inculcate proper self-respect. A mercy to all, to inculcate the habit of giving as a "means of grace."
- LEARN—I. That in soul matters men are equal before God.
II. That our ransom is paid for us.
III. That we are not redeemed with corruptible things, &c.

B.C. 1491. Ex. xxxii. 1—30.

- 1 *delayed* (xxiv. 18; Deut. ix. 9). He was in Mount Sinai 40 days. . . .
Aaron, whom, from what follows, they evidently did not regard as an
equivalent for Moses. . . . *make . gods*; not, "take Moses' place." He
2 made a calf, they made it a god. . . . *Break . earrings*. By which com-
3 mand some think Aaron tried to break them off from their folly. . . . *all .*
people, &c. (Ex. xii. 35). The costs of idolatry prove the power of supersti-
4 tion. . . . *unto Aaron*, whose conduct cannot be wholly excused. . . .
fashioned, formed. Prob. carved a wooden base, on which golden plates
were overlaid. . . . *after, &c.* The gold was cast in plates of needful
thickness. . . . *calf*, the image of one of the gods of Egypt—Apis. . . .
they said. Com. what they said with the facts of the case. The gods of
5 E. were all overthrown (Ps. cvi. 19, 20). . . . *saw it*, set up and wor-
6 shipped. . . . *he*, gave way to the multitude. . . . *they*, celebrated the
7 feast, as the Egyptians did the feast of Apis. . . . *thy people*, not, *my*
8 *people*. . . . *corrupted, &c.* (Hos. xiii. 9). . . . *quickly* = hurriedly (Gal. i.
6). . . . *made*. How exactly was the nature of their apostasy known. . . .
9 *stiff-necked*, a hard neck, that will not bend to commandment of God
10 (xxxiii. 3, 5; xxxiv. 9; Deut. ix. 6). . . . *let . alone*. Do not intercede.
Divine acknowledgment of the power of prayer (Jas. v. 16). Fate of
nation put in hands of Moses. . . . *make . thee*: fulfil the old promise
(Gen. xii. 2), in person of Moses. Would M. give up the people at the
11 price of his own exaltation? . . . *besought*. He stood the test (Heb. iii.
2, 5). He would rather preserve than found a nation. . . . *which thou*.
12 He reminds God of what he had done already. . . . *Wherefore, &c.* M.
13 would have God exalted among the heathen (Is. xlv. 10). . . . *Remember,*
14 *&c.* M. pleads the old promise. . . . *repented*. "An unexpected change
in the things which God has put in his own power is called repentance"
15 (*Augustine*). . . . *turned*, from interceding. . . . *down*, to the plain Er-
Raheh, which is not visible from the top of Jebel Musa = mt of Moses =
16 Sinai. . . . *testimony*, law (xl. 20; Ps. xix. 7). . . . *tables*, of stone (Deut.
ix. 9, 10; Job xix. 24). . . . *work . God*, both the hewing and the writing
17 (xxxii. 18). . . . *Joshua*, who had accompanied Moses (xxiv. 18). . . . *heard*:
18 they could not see. . . . *he*, Moses. . . . *mastery*. Not the shout of victory.
overcome, nor yet of defeat. . . . *sing*. Moses knew more than Joshua.
19 *he saw*, what God had told him of. . . . *brake them*. Such a people were
unworthy of such a law. The breaking of the tables a sign that they had
20 broken the covenant. . . . *took . calf*, no one daring to interfere. Their
21 consciences were against them. . . . *burnt*. See *Analysis*. . . . *What did,*
&c. Moses could not believe that without co-ertion A. would act so sin-
22, 23 fully. . . . *knowest*, as indeed he did. . . . *said*, but he was not therefore
24 bound to obey. . . . *I cast, &c.* He did more than this. The fire could
25 not have made the calf of itself. . . . *naked*, in imitation of heathen custom
when performing their religious rites. They were therefore unarmed also.
26 *sons . Levi*: who, if they had shared in the sin, were now prompt to
27 repent. . . . *slay . brother, &c.* Thus their obedience was tested, and the
28 sons. Levi stood the test. . . . *three thousand*: but they *all* deserved to die
29 (v. 10), and would but for the intercession of Moses. . . . *Consecrate*,
devote yourselves henceforth to his service. Preserve the obedience you
have shown. Suffer not human ties, &c., to interfere (Deut. xxxiii. 9).
30 *sinned*. Moses would have the people remember this.

Absent Leader—Impatient People—Vacillating Priest—Self-denying
Intercessor.

Most large idols had a wooden centre (Isa. xl. 19 ; xxx. 22). Plates of gold were cast and hammered into proper shape and size, and then fixed to this wooden base. The way in which this calf was destroyed shows how it was made. Burnt and crushed (Deut. ix. 21), i. e. the wooden centre first burnt, and then the golden covering beaten or rubbed to pieces.

I. THE ABSENT LEADER. Moses in the mountain. Had been there some 40 days. Employed there in behalf of the people. Receiving Divine instructions concerning their government, &c. Having communicated to him all the plans, &c., of the Tabernacle. Never more interested about the people than now while they were impatient at his delay. (Thus Jesus on the mountain looks towards his disciples on the sea, *C. D. N. T.* 86, 87. Our Leader is absent in person, though present by his Spirit, but he "ever liveth to make intercession" for us.) He went up by Divine command, and told the elders (and through them the people) to tarry till he returned (Ex. xxiv. 12—14). Made provision for their government during his temporary absence.

II. THE IMPATIENT PEOPLE. They saw that he delayed to come down. Did not consider how he was engaged, nor what time it might take. Were disrespectful in their words about their leader, "*this* Moses." They not only did not know, but did not seek to know, what had become of him. Sent no one to inquire or search. Perhaps were rather glad that he, as a restraint upon their conduct, did not return. Certainly believing he was dead, or lost in the defiles of the mountain, they did not mourn his absence or death. Instead of obeying Moses (xxiv. 14), and seeking advice of Aaron and Hur, they went and dictated the course to be pursued. Would not have Aaron in the place of Moses.

III. THE VACILLATING PRIEST. Aaron. (1.) *To the people*. Did not soundly rebuke them. Professed to chime in with their wish. Perhaps he wished to thwart their purpose by interposing their love of show and covetousness between their wish and its fulfilment. Perhaps by telling the men to obtain the ornaments of their wives and children he thought to excite family opposition. Their acceptance of his terms placed him in a dilemma. He makes the calf. (2.) *To Moses*. He does not honestly tell the truth, and humbly confess his sin.

IV. THE SELF-DENYING INTERCESSOR. God told Moses what had occurred. He hastens down from the mount, rebukes Aaron, issues sentence upon the people, and returns to intercede. Is willing himself to be blotted out of God's book, so that the names of the people may stand. Jesus has taken our place. Tasted death for us. Died the just for the unjust. Now intercedes for us.

LEARN—I. To remember one who always thinks about us.

II. To rejoice in one who always intercedes for us.

B.C. 1491. Ex. xxxvii. 1—9.

- 1 *Bezaleel* (= in the protection of God), s. of Uri, grand-s. of Hur, of tb. of Judah. To B. was chiefly intrusted the works for the tab. (xxxii. 2; 1 Ch. ii. 20). Specially skilled in working in metals, and carving stone and wood. His companion Aholiab was engraver and embroiderer (xxxv. 30—35). B., as chief superintendent, is always named first (xxxvi. 1, 2; xxxviii. 22, 23; 2 Ch. i. 5). . . . *made*, according to the pattern given to Moses (xxv. 10, 11). . . . *ark*, a covered vessel. . . . *shittim wood*, w. of the shittah tree, a species of Acacia (*A. vera*). Evidently valuable (Is. xli. 19). Chief qualities, lightness, durability, power of resisting damp, susceptibility of polish. . . . *two cubits and a half* = ab. 4 feet and a half (a cub. in Eng. feet is 1·824, or average length from elbow to point of middle finger). . . . *overlaid*, with plates. . . . *pure gold*, the most precious and durable of metals. . . . *crown*, a raised and carved rim round the upper edge. . . . *rings*, to serve as handles. Prob. fixed ab. half a cub. below the crown. . . . *staves*, poles wherewith to carry it (xxv. 14). They were never quite removed; only drawn out far enough to allow the ark to stand against the back wall, the other ends reaching to the vail which divided the sanctuary from the most holy place (1 Ki. viii. 8). . . . *by . sides*, projecting at right angles to the front. . . . *to bear*. It was carried by the Kohathite Levites (Num. iv. 5, 6, 19, 20; vii. 9; x. 21) into the sanctuary by the priests (1 Ki. vii. 3, 4, 6), by them over Jordan and round Jericho (Josh. iii., iv., vi. 2—16). . . . *mercy seat*, so the lid was called. The seat or throne of him who “delighted in mercy.” Here, between the cherubim, the visible sign of the presence of God—the shekinah—appeared. . . . *pure gold*, not overlaid, but solid gold. . . . *two cherubims*. Winged figures, to represent angelic beings as associated with God in his plans of mercy (Heb. ix. 5; Ps. lxxx. 1; xcix. 1). . . . *two ends*, one cherub at each end. . . . *out . mercy seat* : standing out of it, and on it. . . . *spread . wings*, as an emblem of angelic readiness to do the will of God (Mat. vi. 10; Ps. ciii. 20, 21). . . . *seatward*, towards the mercy seat. They stood opposite to each other, face to face, and inclined or bending over the mercy seat, looking towards the shekinah. Bending in adoration, gazing with inquiring earnestness (Eph. iii. 10; 1 Pet. i. 12).
- I. The ark contained, (1.) Two tables of stone, called the tables of the covenant (Deut. ix. 9—17; x. 1—5). (2.) A roll of the general laws of the kingdom, with its history, to entrance into Canaan (Deut. xxxi. 24—26), including prob. the books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. (3.) The rod of Aaron that budded (Num. xvi., xvii.; com. Heb. ix. 4; v. 1—4). (4.) The golden pot of manna (Ex. xvi. 32—35; Heb. ix. 4; com. Jo. vi. 31—35).
- II. The ark was called, (1.) A. of God (1 Sam. iii. 3). (2.) A. of God's strength (2 Ch. vi. 41; Ps. cxxxii. 8). (3.) A. of covenant (Num. x. 33). (4.) A. of testimony (Ex. xxx. 6; Num. vii. 8, 9).
- III. Principal events connected therewith. Jordan divided (Josh. iv. 7). Fall of Jericho (Josh. vi. 6—20). Fall of Dagon (1 Sam. v. 1—4). Philistines plagued (1 Sam. v. 6—12). Restoration of Israel (1 Sam. vi. 1—18). Twenty years at Kirjath-jearim (1 Sam. vii. 1, 2). Removed to house of Obed-edom (2 Sam. vi. 1—11). Tent made for it by David (2 Sam. vi. 17; 1 Ch. xv. 1). Brought to city of David (2 Ch. vi. 12—15; 1 Ch. xv. 25—28). Brought by Solomon to temple (1 Ki. viii. 1—6; 2 Ch. v. 2—9). Type of Christ (Ps. xl. 8; Rev. xi. 19).

In the House of Obed-edom—A Type of Christ.

I. THE ARK IN THE HOUSE OF OBED-EDOM. (1.) The ark only a sign, we, instead of the sign, have Christ himself. (2.) The ark could be in only one house at a time, Christ can be in the homes of all. (3.) The ark was in Obed-edom's house for only three months; Christ never leaves a house where he is welcomed. . . . Three reasons for a home being happy where the Ark rests:—(a.) *Where Christ is there is a throne of grace.* Mercy seat. Lid of ark sprinkled with blood on day of atonement. Place of communion. (b.) *Where Christ is there is a furnished table.* Pot of manna. Type of bread of life. Christ is that bread. From heaven. Mysterious nature. Nutritious (less. 57). (c.) *Where Christ comes in sin goes out.* Gentle words, holy delights, deeds of love come in; sinful tempers, pleasures, actions, depart. Two questions:—1. Have you Christ in the heart? 2. Are you like Christ in the house? (Joseph in prison. Israelitish maid. Abridged from "*Children's Church at Home*," vol. i. 250, Dr Edmond's.) (See also less. 103.)

II. THE ARK A TYPE OF CHRIST. (1.) An assurance of God's presence among his people; so Christ is the cause and assurance that God in a gracious way is present with us. (2.) Where the ark was, there it was lawful to offer sacrifice, and nowhere else; which might show that our acceptance in God's sight is through Jesus Christ. (3.) In the ark was the pot of manna, to show that in Christ is the life, comfort, and spiritual nourishment of our souls. (4.) The ark had a crown of gold about it, signifying the majesty of Christ's kingdom and his regal power. (5.) The two tables of the law were in the ark, the ark kept them, which might signify Christ's keeping the law perfectly for us, and delivering us thereby from the curse of it. (6.) When the ark was set in the temple of Dagon, Dagon fell down and broke to pieces; so when Christ and his truth are set up in a man's heart, or a nation, sin and idolatry will go down. (7.) Where the ark was there was the glory of God, and when that departed the glory of God departed; so where Christ's blessed gospel is there is the glory of God; but when Christ leaves a people, takes away his gospel, the glory of God goes from that people. (Abridged from *Benjamin Keach on the Types.*)

Arise, O King of grace, arise,
And enter to thy rest;
Lo! thy Church waits with longing eyes
Thus to be owned and blessed.
Enter with all thy glorious train,
Thy Spirit and thy word;
All that the ark did once contain
Could no such grace afford.—(Watts.)

God in his temple let us meet;
Low on our knees before him bend;
Here hath he fixed his mercy seat,
Here on his sabbath we attend.
Arise into thy resting-place,
Thou, and thine ark of strength, O Lord;
Shine through the veil, we seek thy face;
Speak, for we hearken to thy word.
(Montgomery.)

LEARN—

- I. To rejoice that the worship of God is not now confined to one place.
- II. That the way to the Father is by Jesus Christ.

B.C. 1490. Lev. ix. 1—24.

- 1 *eighth day*. Not of the month, but on the first day after their consecration, which occupied seven days. To this time they were considered imperfect: most creatures were deemed imperfect seven days, and perfected the eighth (xii. 2, 3; xiv. 8; Num. vi. 9, 10). The very day after. No time to be lost (cxix. 16; xl. 7). They enter on their duty with solemn sacrifice for themselves and nation. . . . *Moses*. The directions are still given through him. . . . *sons*. Four: Nadab, Abihu, Eleazer, Ithamar.
- 2 *elders*, leading persons in each tribe. . . . *young calf* (2 Cor. v. 21; Heb. v. 3; vii. 27; x. 10—14). . . . *sin offering*, for themselves. The priests needed an atonement. Some think the sacrifice pointed to Aaron's sin—a calf! . . . *ram* (viii. 18). . . . *burnt offering*, by its entire consumption to
- 3 denote their entire dedication. . . . *children . Israel*. They too must sacrifice. . . . *thou . speak*. Exhorting others to do what he had just done for himself. . . . *blemish* (Heb. ix. 14; 1 Pet. i. 18, 19; 2 Pet. iii. 14). . . .
- 4 *Lord . appear*. Confirming the appointment of Aaron, and accepting the
- 5 sacrifices. . . . *And they*. Aaron's sons and elders. . . . *brought*: the elders having meanwhile informed the people. . . . *before*, within the court, where the elevated altar was (Ex. xxvii. 10—16). . . . *drew near*: nearness of thought and expectation; also of peace. The altar was raised
- 6 and the sign was fire, hence they would see from a distance. . . . *Moses*
- 7 *said*, repeating both the command and the promise. . . . *unto Aaron*: final command. . . . *thyself*. Thou hast sinned. Be humble. Let there be no
- 8 official pride. . . . *for himself*. He must be accepted before he can act for
- 9 the people. Our high priest is holy, &c. . . . *horns . altar*, projecting hooks at each corner. Emblem of power (Ps. cxviii. 27). Even the altar to be purified. . . . *the blood* (Mat. xxvi. 28; Heb. ix. 22). To purify the
- 10 service. Even our holiest services are not without defect. . . . *fat, &c., burnt*. Giving up our inward parts, secret thoughts, feelings, &c., to
- 11 serve the Lord (1 Pet. iii. 18; Is. iv. 4; 1 Thess. v. 23; Ps. li. 6; ciii. 1). . . . *flesh . burnt*. The whole victim to be sacrificed, none eaten. . . .
- 15 *And he*, having offered for himself, and being now accepted, he proceeds to offer for the people. . . . *sin offering*. Offered for sin, that by the shedding
- 16 of blood sin might be remitted. . . . *to . manner*. The manner prescribed,
- 17 i.e. the ordinance. . . . *meat offering*, testifying thankfulness to God for
- 18 ordinary and daily mercies. . . . *sacrifice . peace*, expressive of peace with
- 21 God, and between man and man (Eph. ii. 14, 15). . . . *wave offering*. So called because the priest held it up, and waved it before the Lord, as a special presentation (Ex. xxix. 24—27; Lev. vii. 29—34; viii. 27; ix. 21; x. 14, 15; Num. vi. 20; viii. 11, *marg.*; xviii. 11, 18, 26—29). . . .
- 22 *lifted . hands*: which not only was a solemn invocation of the Divine blessing, but was also a useful sign to the people, who could see, if they could not hear. . . . *blessed them*, pronounced them blessed . . . *came*
- 23 *down*. The offering being now finished. . . . *went into*. Aaron being now installed as priest in the presence of the people, Moses now introduces him into the sanctuary, where he was henceforth to serve the Lord; and presents him to the Lord. . . . *came out*. The Lord having accepted him as his priest. . . . *blessed . people*. Both Moses and Aaron. Moses now thus indicating the installation of Aaron as complete. . . . *glory . appeared*. Prob. a sudden flash of miraculous light, proceeding from the cloud which
- 24 covered the tabernacle. . . . *fire*. Denoting the Divine acceptance of both the priest and the sacrifice. . . . *from before*, not down from heaven.

Notes on Priest and Priesthood.

NOTES ON PRIEST AND PRIESTHOOD. (1.) Word priest is contracted from presbyter, i.e. elder. Meaning essentially dif. from presbyter. Critics not agreed on ground-meaning of Heb. *côhen* = priest. "It implies," says Gesenius, "the notion of presaging, or divining; hence one who communicates the Divine will to men." (2.) From beginning sacrifice was the mode of worship. Natural that one should on behalf of household present the sacrifice. First priesthood, therefore, of a domestic character (Gen. viii. 20; xii. 8). (3.) The idea of priestly class familiarized by sojourn in Egypt. (4.) Pleased God to select one family for the priesthood (Ex. xxviii. 1; Heb. v. 1—4). (5.) Functions of priest various. (a.) Offering sacrifices (Lev. vi.). (b.) Purifying unclean (Lev. xv. 30, 31). (c.) Teaching law (Deut. xxxiii. 8, 10). (See also Num. xviii. 1, 5, 7; iv. 5—15; vi. 23—27; v. 14, 15; Ex. xxvii. 20, 21; Lev. vi. 12, 13, &c.) (6.) Descendants of Aaron, priests by hereditary right. But certain blemishes excluded (Lev. xxi., xxii.). (7.) They had a special revenue. (a.) Tenth of tithes (Num. xviii. 26, 28). (b.) Redemption-money (Num. iii. 48, 51). (c.) First-born of animals (Nu. xviii. 17, 18; Ex. xiii. 12, 13). (d.) First wool (Deut. xviii. 4). (e.) Shewbread (Lev. xxiv. 9; Mat. xii. 4; *C. D. N. T.*, 50). (8.) Had special laws (Lev. xxi. 7; x. 9; xxii. 1, 2; Nu. xix. 6, 7, &c.). (9.) Had special vestments (Ex. xxviii. 40—43, &c.). (10.) Were divided by David into 24 courses (1 Ch. xxiv. 1—19; 2 Ch. viii. 14; xxxv. 4, 5). The four courses which returned from Babylon subdivided into 24 (Ezra ii. 36—39; Lu. i. 5). (11.) Had a special consecration. Ceremonies prescribed by Moses, and carried out in consecration of Aaron and sons. Consisted in sacrifices, washings, putting on holy garments, sprinkling of blood, anointing, and lasted seven days (Ex. xxix. 1—37; Lev. viii., ix.). Were doubtless designed—

I. TO INSTRUCT THE PRIESTS. (1.) That they too were sinners, and needed atonement (*v.* 7). (2.) That hence they should sympathize with the people. (3.) That they were to be wholly consecrated to God (*see* viii. 23, 24). They were to hearken to the words, do the works, and walk in the ways of God. (4.) That they were to hallow the name and character of God. Hence they were to be clean who bore the vessels of the Lord.

II. TO INSTRUCT THE PEOPLE. (1.) That they were not to meddle with the functions of an office to which divinely-selected men had been ceremoniously dedicated. (2.) That they were to venerate the men for the sake of their office. These imposing ceremonies would much impress such people at such a time. (On this subject see *Ritualism*, by Dr Robert Vaughan, pp. 1—44.)

LEARN—I. To honour the high priest of our profession—Jesus Christ (Heb. iii. 1).

II. To rejoice that the day of a merely human priesthood is past (Heb. vi. 20; vii. 11—28; viii.).

Hymns: "Jesus, our Lord, ascend thy throne" (*Watts*); "Join all the glorious names" (*Watts*); "A good high-priest has come" (*Cennick*).

B.C. 1490. Lev. x. 1—7.

- 1 *Nadab* (= spontaneous, liberal), eldest son of Aaron (Ex. vi. 23; xxiv. 1, 9; xxviii. 1; Num. iii. 2—4; xxvi. 60, 61; 1 Ch. vi. 3; xxiv. 1, 2). *Abihu* (= to whom *He*, i. e. God, is father), second s. of Aaron (Ex. vi. 23; Num. iii. 2). . . . *sons of Aaron*. The greater their sin (1 Sam. ii. 12) and our surprise. It is possible they presumed too much on their descent, and office, and the honours already conferred upon them. They were allowed to ascend Sinai with Moses and Aaron to behold some manifestation of God (Ex. xxiv. 1, 9, 10). . . . *either* = each. . . . *censer*. A kind of portable brazier, either swung with chains, or having a long handle. On the lighted coals it contained, the incense was scattered, the fumes of which escaped through perforations in the cover (Num. iv. 14; Lev. xvi. 12; Ex. xxvii. 3; 1 Ki. vii. 50; Heb. ix. 4). . . . *incense*. A fragrant composition made of "sweet spices, stacte, onycha, and galbanum; these sweet spices with pure frankincense," of each an equal weight (Ex. xxx. 34—36). . . . *thereon*, on the coals in the censer. . . . *strange fire*. Burning coals from off the altar ought to have been used (xvi. 12; Num. xvi. 18, 46), and no other. N. and A. treated this law as of no importance. Thought that common fire would burn their incense as well as the other. *commanded . not*. Their act was therefore a presumptuous violation of law
- 2 (Ex. xxx. 9; Deut. iv. 2; xii. 32; Ps. xix. 13; 2 Pet. ii. 10). . . . *fire*. *Lord*, from the most holy place, that all might see their death was by the judgment of God. . . . *devoured*, killed, as with a penetrating flash, not
- 3 consumed: since they were carried out in their coats. . . . *Moses . unto Aaron*. One old man and brother, to another. He alone can approach the bereaved and wonder-stricken father. . . . *This . it*. He cannot administer ordinary comfort; but simply explain and vindicate the course of God. . . . *sanctified*. Held in profound reverence, and this shown by a precise regard for my law (viii. 35; xxi. 6, 8, 15, 21; xxii. 9; Num. xx. 12; Deut. xxxii. 51; Ps. lxxxix. 7; Is. lii. 11; Heb. xii. 28, 29; Mat. v. 9). . . . *before . people*, since "Like priest, like people." What might not the people become, if the priests grew careless? *glorified*, held in the highest honour. . . . *Aaron . peace*. What could he say? (Gen. xviii. 25; 1 Sam. iii. 18; Job i. 20, 21; ii. 10; Ps. xxxix. 9; xlv. 10; Is. xxxix. 8; Mat. x. 37). . . .
- 4 *called*, relatives, being as kind to their memory as he dared. . . . *Mishael* (= who is what God is), (Ex. vi. 22). . . . *Elzaphan* (= whom God protects), called also Elizaphan (Num. iii. 20; 1 Ch. xv. 8; 2 Ch. xxix. 13). *Uzziel* (= might of God), s. of Kohath and grandson of Levi (Ex. vi. 18, 22; Lev. x. 4; Num. iii. 19, 30; 1 Ch. vi. 2, 18; xv. 10; xxiii. 12, 20; xxiv. 24). . . . *carry . out*. The dead not to remain before the "God of the
- 5 living" (Lu. vii. 12; Ac. v. 6, 9, 10; viii. 2). . . . *in . coats*, which being
- 6 unconsumed proves the sudden character of the death. . . . *Uncover . heads*. Let there be no sign of mourning as if you regretted their punishment. *bewail . burning*. Not the death, but the sin was to be mourned. The people were to stand in awe of the anger of the Lord (Deut. iv. 24; Heb.
- 7 xii. 29). . . . *not . go*: which filled with awe they might be disposed to do, when they saw the perils to which any carelessness, in the discharge of their duties, might expose them. . . . *for, &c.*, as the fire was holy, so also was the oil. They might treat it lightly as the others had the fire. Punishment not limited to one form of sin. Carelessness or presumption in any particular would be dangerous and sinful. . . . *they did, &c.* Fearing the anger of the Lord. Only by repeated judgments could they be disciplined to obedience.

 Who Offered it—What they Offered—How they were Received.

- I. WHO OFFERED IT. Nadab and Abihu. The last, one would have expected to be guilty of such a sin. They were not ignorant, but over-zealous people, who only imperfectly knew the law. But they were the sons of Aaron. Even among the priestly order they were pre-eminent. Could hardly be ignorant of the sin they were committing. The best that can be said of them is, that they were not sufficiently thoughtful. Ignorance and thoughtlessness are sinful in those with whom knowledge is possible, and who have many incentives to consideration. 'Where ignorance is bliss,' &c., a fallacy. We should strive to *know* that we may more perfectly *do* the will of God. He that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin. The great probability is that their sin was not merely sin of ignorance, but presumption. They considered that one kind of fire was as good as another. Preferred their choice to God's.
- II. WHAT THEY OFFERED. From Lev. xvi.; Num. xvi. 18, 46, it is clear that they should have taken a coal from off the altar. Every act of worship was strictly prescribed (and this, if not at that time in written law, must have been known, *see v. 1*). Intention to beget in the minds of the people a profound reverence for the will of God. In everything to consider *his* will first. To find their happiness in obedience. Instead of acting in accordance with the will of God, they obeyed the impulse of their own proud and selfish hearts. It might be in their estimation a small matter, but if done with impunity, would have been followed by other and greater sins. Their careless disobedience would have spread in the camp until there had been a subversion of all law. Imagine, then, these men with their strange fire drawing near to God. It is likely that the *time* of offering was also wrong (*K. D. ii. 351*).
- III. HOW THEY WERE RECEIVED. They draw near and swing their censers. And suddenly "there went out fire," &c. (*v. 2*). Their strange fire had been replied to with a fire more strange to them. The fire of the holy God (Ex. xix. 18), which had just sanctified the service of Aaron as well-pleasing to God, brought destruction upon his two eldest sons, because they had not sanctified Jehovah in their hearts, but had taken upon them a self-willed service; just as the same gospel is to one a savour of life unto life, and to another a savour of death unto death (2 Cor. ii. 16). They were struck dead as by a lightning flash. A sudden and emphatic protest against their presumption.

LEARN—

- I. To study earnestly that we may more perfectly obey the will of God.
- II. To avoid trifling with holy things and ordinances.
- III. The instruments of sin may become instruments of punishment. With fire they sinned, by fire they were overthrown.
- IV. The very gospel, if abused, may become an instrument of condemnation.

B.C. 1490. Lev. xvi. 5—22.

- 5 *he*, i.e. Aaron. . . . *congregation*, the people collectively. . . . *two kids* (iv. 4; Num. xxix. 11; Ezr. vi. 17; Ro. viii. 3; Heb. vii. 27, 28; x. 5—14). *sin offering*, had respect to sins committed ignorantly, and was modified in relation to persons presenting it (iv. 3, 13, 22, 27). . . . *burnt offering* (Lev. i. 2—5, com. Heb. xii. 24). End of burnt offering was an atonement for sin (i. 4, com. Heb. x. 1—3, 11). The most solemn of all
- 6 Jewish sacrifices. . . . *for himself*, a consciousness of his own sinfulness should awaken compassion for the people (Heb. v. 1—4). . . . *his house*, of the need of which the case of Nadab, &c., might remind him. . . . *and he*, being accepted of God through his own offering, was then, and not till
- 7 then, to make atonement for the people. . . . *before . . . door, &c.* Thus was Jesus offered at Jerusalem (Mat. xvi. 21). . . . *cast lots*, a common practice (Prov. xvi. 33; see also Num. xxvi. 55; xxxiii. 54; Jos. xviii. 10, 11; 1
- 8 Sam. xiv. 41, 42; Eze. xlvi. 29; Ac. i. 23—26). . . . *scapegoat*, Heb. *Azazel*, from *aiz* = goat, and *azal* = to depart. Hence, among many opinions on the meaning of the word *Azazel*, one is, that it was a name given to the goat itself on account of his “being let go:” others prefer *Azazel* = “for complete sending away,” alluding to *sin* imputed, by imposi-
- 9 tion of hands, to the goat. This latter is now generally received. . . . *lot fell*. No account in Scripture of casting lots. The Rabbins say that having placed the two goats one on each side of an urn, in which two lots—one marked “for Jehovah” and one “*Azazel*”—were placed; the priest inserted both hands in the urn and removed them with a lot in each. The
- 10 right-hand lot belonged to the right-hand goat, &c. . . . *wilderness* (see
- 11 *rv.* 21, 22). . . . *for himself*, that he might the better make atonement for
- 12 the people (Ps. li. 12, 13). . . . *fire . . . altar*. Which failing to do his sons
- 13 had perished (less. 65). . . . *incense*, emblem of earnest prayer (Rev. v. 8; 14
- 14 viii. 3, 4). . . . *blood . . . mercy seat* (Heb. ix. 12, 23).
- 20 *reconciling . . . holy place*. In some sort defiled by the sins of the people (*v.* 16; Eze. xlv. 20; 2 Cor. v. 19; Col. i. 20; Heb. ix. 23, 24). . . . *live*
- 21 *goat* (Ro. v. 24, 25; viii. 34; Heb. vii. 25; Rev. i. 18). . . . *lay . . . hands*. Solemnly transferring the national guilt to the animal “for complete sending away”—*Azazel*. . . . *confess*, public acknowledgments of their sins as a people (xxvi. 40; Ezra x. 1; Neh. i. 6, 7; Ps. xxxii. 5; li. 3; Prov. xxviii. 13; Da. ix. 3—20; Ro. x. 10). . . . *putting . . . head*, imputing them to (Is. liii. 6; 2 Cor. v. 21; Gal. iii. 13; 1 Pet. ii. 22—24). . . . *send away*, from the people, and their sins with it. . . . *fit man*. Heb. man of opportunity. Prob. a man who would faithfully discharge this duty. . . . *wilderness* (Lev. xxiv. 23; Deut. xxiii. 10; Heb. xiii. 13). So Jesus, who bore our sins in his own body on the tree, was crucified out of Jerusalem.
- 22 *not inhabited*. Heb. = of separation (Ps. ciii. 10, 12; Eze. xviii. 22; Mic. vii. 19). [The Rabbins say that the high priest fastened a long fillet or narrow piece of scarlet to the head of the scapegoat; and that after he had confessed his own sins and those of the people over his head, or when he was finally dismissed, this fillet changed colour to white if the atonement were accepted by God, but else it retained its natural colour. It is to this that they understand Isaiah to allude when he says (i. 18), “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (see *Kitto's Illus. Bible*, Sangster's edition, Lev. xvi. 10).]

Innocent Victim—Imputed Transgressions—Delivered People.

- I. THE INNOCENT VICTIM. (1.) *Innocent*. Had no sins of its own to bear. Thus Jesus Christ, "who knew no sin, was made sin for us; bare our sins in his own body on the tree" (1 Pet. ii. 24). With sins of its own how could it atone for the sins of others? No man selected who might ceremonially bear the sins of the people away, and then return after being ceremonially purified. (2.) *Divinely selected*. Chosen by lot. "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord." Jesus was the Lamb of God. The lamb of Divine selection. "I will provide." Hence how great should be our confidence in this Saviour! (3.) *Representative*. Goat generally regarded as representing evil propensities, and therefore as specially illustrating the wicked (Mat. xxv. 32—46). So Jesus took our nature. Likeness of men and of sinful flesh (Phil. ii. 7; Ro. viii. 3).
- II. THE IMPUTED TRANSGRESSIONS. (1.) Of *all* the people; and *all* their iniquities. Vast number, variety, &c., of their sins. Jesus gave himself a ransom for all. Died for our sins. (2.) Transferred from the people by the will of God. The people could not resolve this of themselves. This of the grace of God. By the grace of God Jesus tasted death for us. Our sins laid upon him according to the mercy of God. (3.) Transferred by the priest with confession. They were to be acknowledged as the people's sins. Confession of sin a condition of our acceptance. Not that God does not know, but that the act of confession brings our guilt home more to our own heart, and tends to promote humility and an earnest desire for mercy. Besides, God has willed it (Lev. v. 5; Hos. v. 15), and added promises of mercy to such as obey (Lev. xxvi. 40—42; Prov. xxviii. 13). And pardon follows (Ps. xxxii. 5; 1 Jo. i. 9). (4.) Bearing this burden, the goat was then led away into the wilderness. Away from the camp, whither it might never return to defile it. The iniquity to be clean gone for ever. The people not to be punished for the sins thus "removed far" from them. Christ bore our reproaches, and was crucified outside the camp.
- III. THE DELIVERED PEOPLE. (1.) Deliverance from sin the greatest deliverance. Other deliverances being temporal, but this eternal; others bodily, &c., this spiritual. (2.) It would promote happiness. They felt that a great load had been removed. Rejoiced in spiritual liberty. The joy of imputed innocence. Now looked upon with favour, their sins being borne away. "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." (3.) It would excite gratitude. Otherwise they would have had to answer for their sins. Apply this to Jesus, and those who are saved from wrath through him.
- LEARN—
- I. Christ Jesus was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.
- II. He made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made, &c.
- III. The duty of confession and personal faith.

B.C. 1490. Lev. xxiii.

- 4 *These, following. . . feasts* = festivals. Were private and domestic (marriage, weaning, &c.), or public, national and religious. Of these latter those named in this chap. are: (1.) Passover (*vv.* 5—8); (2.) Pentecost (*vv.* 9—21); (3.) Trumpets (*vv.* 23—25); (4.) Tabernacles (*vv.* 33—44). . . of . *Lord*, of his ordering, for his honour, to which he invited the whole nation. . . *holy*, in spirit and object. To be sacredly observed. . . *convocations*, assemblies, called together by sound of trumpet (Num. x. 2). . . *proclaim*, make widely known. . . *their seasons*, times when they fell due.
- 5—8. (I.) The feast of the PASSOVER, or *unleavened bread* (*less.* 54, *C. D. N. T.* 8). Held from 15—22 of Nisan. The 15th began on the eve of the 14th. The 1st and 7th are real festival days (see *vv.* 5, 8). The other 5 days are "*the week days*" of the festival (*com.* Ex. xii. 6; Num. xxviii. 16—25; Deut. xvi. 1—8). Divinely ordained (Ex. xii. 2, 6, 18; Num. ix. 3). All males to appear (Ex. xxiii. 17; Deut. xvi. 16). Paschal lamb eaten 1st day (Ex. xii. 6, 8). Unleavened bread eaten (Ex. xii. 15; Deut. xvi. 3). Signalized, *passing over* (Ex. xii. 12, 13). Deliverance from bondage (Ex. xii. 17, 42; xiii. 9; Deut. xvi. 3). Perpetually observed (Ex. xii. 14; xiii. 10). Purification needful (2 Ch. xxx. 15—19; John xi. 55). Neglect punished (Num. ix. 13). (See also Heb. xi. 28; Mat. xxvi. 17—28; xxvii. 15; Lu. xxii. 15; xxiii. 16, 17; Jo. ii. 13, 23; 1 Cor. v. 7, 8.)
- 9—21. (II.) The feast of PENTECOST, of weeks, or of harvest (*C. D. N. T.* 210, 211). To be held the 50th day after offering first sheaf of barley harvest (Deut. xvi. 9); called feast of harvest (Ex. xxiii. 16); of weeks (Ex. xxxiv. 22; Deut. xvi. 10); day of first-fruits (Num. xxviii. 26). Pentecost (Ac. ii. 1) to be always observed (Lev. xxiii. 21). All males to attend (Ex. xxiii. 16, 17; Deut. xvi. 16). Time of rejoicing (Deut. xvi. 11, 12). First-fruits of bread presented at (Deut. xvi. 10; Lev. xxiii. 17). Law given on Sinai (Ex. xix. 1, 11; Ex. xii. 6, 12). Holy Ghost given (Ac. ii. 1—3). Observed by early Church (Ac. xx. 16; 1 Cor. xvi. 8).
- 23—25. (III.) The feast of TRUMPETS, called by the Jews "*the new year*" (1st Tishri). Held first day of seventh month (Num. xxix. 1). A day of rest (Ex. xvi. 23). Sacrifices offered (Num. xxix. 2—6). On this day the *shophar* (a large horn which produced a dull, far-reaching tone) was to be blown: a blast of trumpets to be appointed for a memorial before Jehovah (Num. x. 10), i. e. to call the congregation in remembrance before the Lord, that he might turn towards it his favour and grace (Ex. xxviii. 12, 29; xxx. 16).
- 33—44. (IV.) The feast of TABERNACLES, or of ingathering of the harvest (Ex. xxxiv. 22), from 15th to 22nd of Tishri. First day the real feast day, the 6 following are the "*week days*." Held after harvest and vintage (Deut. xvi. 13). All males to appear (Ex. xxiii. 16, 17). Holy convocation, first and last days (Num. xxix. 12, 35). Sacrifices (Num. xxix. 13—39). Rejoicing (Deut. xvi. 14, 15). Held perpetually (Lev. xxiii. 41). Booths used (Neh. viii. 15, 16). Law read every seventh year at it (Deut. xxxi. 10—12; Neh. viii. 18). Palm branches borne (Lev. xxiii. 40; Rev. vii. 9). Water drawn from Siloam (Is. xii. 3; Jo. vii. 2, 37—39). Hosannas sung (Ps. cxviii. 24—29; Mat. xxi. 8, 9). Commemorated Israel's stay in wilderness (Lev. xxiii. 43). (See also 1 Ki. viii. 2, 65; Ezra iii. 4; Neh. viii. 17.)

Their Political—Sanitary—Social—Moral—and Religious Effects.

- I. **POLITICAL EFFECTS.** Annual gatherings of the people exhibited the numerical strength of the nation. As they went “from strength to strength,” i. e. from company to company (Ps. lxxxiv. 7 *margin.*), on their way to Jerusalem, and saw the vast crowds flocking from all parts of the kingdom to the capital, their patriotic ardour would be fired. The numbers would be great as each tribe desired to be well represented. The unity of the nation, too, would be ensured by this fusion of the tribes. Otherwise they would be likely to constitute separate tribal states. They would carry back to the provinces glowing accounts of the wealth, power, and resources of the country.
- II. **SANITARY EFFECTS.** They would greatly influence the health of the people. [The sabbath, necessitating weekly cleansings, and rest from work, and laws and ceremonies concerning disease—(as leprosy)—and purifications, deserve to be looked at in this light also.] The annual purifying of the houses at feast of unleavened bread; the dwelling at certain times in tents,—leaving the houses to the free circulation of light and air; and the repeated journey on foot to Jerusalem; must have had a great sanitary influence. As man was the great object of creation, so his welfare—in many respects besides religion—was plainly aimed at in these regulations.
- III. **SOCIAL EFFECTS.** Promoted friendly intercourse between travelling companions. Distributed information through the country at a time when the transmission of news was slow and imperfect. Imported into remote provincial districts a practical knowledge of all improvements in arts and sciences. Enlarged the general stock of knowledge by bringing many minds, and great variety of taste, together. Spread before the eyes of the nation the wonders collected in Jerusalem by the wealth and foreign alliances of Jewish kings (*ill. (a.)* Solomon’s menageries, &c. (*b.)* The great exhibition).
- IV. **MORAL EFFECTS.** The young looking forward to, the aged looking back upon, and all talking about past or future pilgrimages to the city of the great King. Education, thus, of memory and hope and desire. Influence of this on the habits of the people. Thrift promoted to provide against expenses of the journey. The promise of bearing company held out as reward to well-conducted youth. Enlargement of knowledge, improvement of taste, advantage to health, fixing habits, &c., would all re-act morally, on the character of the people.
- V. **RELIGIOUS EFFECTS.** These the most important. Preserved the religious faith of the nation, and religious unity among the people. Constantly reminded the people of the divinely-wrought deliverances of the past. Promoted gratitude and trust. This God their dwelling-place in all generations. Testified the reverence of the people for the temple and its sacred contents. Influence of well-conducted temple services upon the synagogues through the land. Led the mind of the nation to adore the one true and only God.

B.C. 1491. Lev. xxv. 39—55.

39 *brother* = fellow countryman. . . . *waxen* = grown (A.S. *weaxan*). . . . *be sold*, in payment of a debt; or to make restitution for a wrong (Ex. xxii. 3). . . . *compel*, using violence. . . . *bondservant*, slave. Mosaic law found slavery existing, made regulations for it. No sanction thereby given to one man's holding another as his property. Laws deal with men as they are, to make them better: those laws the best which inculcate principles tending to amelioration of society. *Com.* the state of these slaves with modern systems (and see Ex. xx. 10; xxi. 20, 21, 26, 27; 40 Deut. v. 14, 15; xii. 12, 18; xvi. 11, 14; Lev. xxiv. 17, 22). . . . *as* = as if he were. . . . *sojourner*, free to come or go. . . . *serve thee*. As bound to do so, with the reasonable service of one hired. . . . *jubilee*. And then to be free. Bondage not perpetual, much less were the children slaves. 41 *depart*, having worked out his debt, or made restitution (Deut. xv. 13— 42 15). . . . *possession*, then to be restored (vv. 10, 28). . . . *For* = this is the reason of leniency. . . . *my servants*, and we are to treat his servants kindly (Ro. vi. 22; 1 Cor. vii. 21—23). . . . *sold as, &c.*: not sold to, or 43 bought as strangers. . . . *fear . God*. And therefore keep his law, and be 44 kind and just to man. . . . *which . have*, i. e. if thou hast any. . . . *heathen*, whose bondage in their case might be judicial. Even these were not to be kidnapped (Ex. xxi. 16; 1 Tim. i. 9, 10). Such were captives taken 45 in war, &c. . . . *Moreover*, besides the heathen. . . . *strangers*, friends, 46 foreigners, allies. . . . *they . your brethren*. The relation of the Jew to the heathen was very different from that of the Christian to the rest of 47 mankind. More political than ours. . . . *And*, now another cause is discussed, i. e. that of a Hebrew becoming bondman to a stranger. . . . *sell* 48 *himself*, voluntarily, to pay a debt, or to obtain food. . . . *redeemed again*, which the stranger, selling himself to the Hebrew, could not be. . . . *one . brethren*. Christ, our elder brother, has redeemed us (vv. 25, 35; Neh. v. 49 5, 8; Gal. iv. 4, 5; Heb. ii. 11—13). . . . *nigh . kin*, a near relation, and therefore supposed to have the stronger affection and claim. . . . *if . able*. Growing richer by inheritance or thrift. . . . *redeem himself*. The stranger in either case being compelled to accept the price of redemption. 50 *reckon*, count up, calculate (v. 26). . . . *price . sale*, i. e. the profit that the seller would have made had no redemption taken place. . . . *time . hired servants*; not according to the forced and rigorous labour of a hard-driven slave, but according to what an easily and justly-worked hired servant 51 might have earned in the time. . . . *years behind*, i. e. between the year of such redemption and of jubilee. The kinsman was to be as just to the stranger, as kind to his relative. . . . *money . bought for*. Hence if there had been £500 originally given for 5 years' service, that = £100 for each 54 year before the expiration of the term. . . . *free*: the Hebrew was not to 55 be the perpetual slave of the stranger. . . . *For . my servants*. This the great reason. They were redeemed of God. Belonged to him. Therefore can no man now be another's property, because all belong to God. "Bought with a price," by one who "gave himself a ransom for all." The Mosaic law found slavery in existence, and ameliorated the condition of the slave, at the same time enunciated principles, which, expanded under the Christian dispensation, abolish slavery for ever.*

* "Slavery is that which cramps powers. The worst slavery is that which cramps the noblest powers. Worse therefore than he who manacles the hands and feet, is he who puts fetters on the mind."—(F. W. Robertson.)

Texts—Notes—Lessons.

TEXTS RELATING TO SLAVES. (1.) Called bondmen (Gen. xliii. 18 ; xliv. 9). (2.) By birth (Gen. xiv. 14 ; Ps. cxvi. 16 ; Jer. ii. 14). (3.) By purchase (Gen. xvii. 27 ; xxxvii. 36). (4.) Sometimes captives taken in war (Deut. xx. 14 ; 2 Ki. v. 2). (5.) Strangers, under certain restrictions (Lev. xxv. 45). (6.) Foreigners, might be purchased (xxv. 44). (7.) Debtors, liable to be sold (2 Ki. iv. 1 ; Neh. v. 4, 5 ; Mat. xviii. 25). (8.) Thieves were sold (Ex. xxii. 3). (9.) Israelites to be kindly treated (Lev. xxv. 39, 40, 46), and to be liberated after six years (Ex. xxi. 2 ; Deut. xv. 12) ; or if they refused to be free, then (Ex. xxi. 5, 6 ; Deut. xv. 16, 17), when sold to foreigners might be redeemed (Lev. xxv. 47—55), or be free at the jubilee (Lev. xxv. 10, 40, 41, 54), but could not demand wife and child procured during bondage (Ex. xxi. 3, 4) ; were to be furnished liberally on regaining liberty (Deut. xv. 13, 14). (10.) Foreign slaves to rest on Sabbath (Ex. xx. 10), to share in national rejoicing (Deut. xii. 18 ; xvi. 11, 14). (11.) If ill-treated by masters, to be set free (Ex. xxi. 26, 27). (12.) Laws respecting killing slaves (Ex. xxi. 20, 21). (13.) If they ran away, not to be delivered up (Deut. xxiii. 15). (14.) Sometimes rose to rank (Eccl. x. 7), and might intermarry with master's family (1 Ch. ii. 34, 35). (15.) Kidnapping condemned (Ex. xxi. 16 ; Deut. xxiv. 7 ; 1 Tim. i. 10).

NOTE ON THE ABOVE TEXTS. Consider : (1.) The nature of slavery as practised by the heathen world (*ill.* the treatment of Israelites by Egyptians). (2.) The restraint laid upon these Israelites in their conduct to foreign bondsmen. But for these laws, how might these people—who had been slaves of foreigners themselves—have treated foreigners when in their turn they became masters? (3.) The relation of Israelitish slaves to Israelitish masters, with their privileges (social and religious), and certain freedom. (4.) The causes for which alone they might become slaves. (5.) Especially consider that while these laws ameliorated the condition of slavery as it then existed,—eliminating the elements of cruelty, &c., leaving, in fact, nothing of bondage but the name,—they paved the way, by the training of justice and mercy, for the total extinction of slavery. (6.) Christianity in spirit, precept, and practice against slavery. (*a.*) Asserts that there is no bond or free, but that all are one in Christ. (*b.*) Teaches the fraternity of the race. “God hath made of one blood,” &c. “All we are brethren.” (*c.*) Strikingly illustrates this by the case of a runaway slave,—Onesimus,—whom Paul sent back to his master, whom in some way he had wronged, not as a slave, but as brother beloved (Philemon).

LEARN—

- I. No warrant for modern slavery in the word of God (Is. lviii. 6).
- II. Spiritual slavery the worst form (2 Tim. ii. 26).
- III. This may be the state of men who are politically free (Jo. viii. 34 ; 2 Pet. ii. 19).
- IV. Jesus the great Emancipator (Jo. viii. 32—36 ; Ro. vi. 18—22 ; Gal. v. 1 ; 1 Pet. ii. 16).

B.C. 1490. Num. ix. 15—23.

- 15 *on the day* (Ex. xl. 2, 17). The first day of the *second* year after the Exodus. The first day of the *first* year being that of the Exodus itself (Ex. xii. 2; xiii. 4; Deut. xvi. 1), and which was commemorated by the feast of the Passover. . . . *tabernacle* (= a tent, dwelling), called T. of congregation (Ex. xvii. 21; xxxiii. 7; xl. 26). T. of the Lord (Jos. xxii. 19; 1 Ki. ii. 28; 1 Ch. xvi. 39). T. of witness (Ex. xxxviii. 21; Num. i. 50; xvii. 7; 2 Ch. xxiv. 6; Ac. vii. 44). T. of Shiloh (Ps. lxxviii. 60). T. of Joseph (Ps. lxxviii. 67). Temple of the Lord (1 Sam. i. 9; iii. 3). House of the Lord (Jos. vi. 24; 1 Sam. i. 7, 24). . . . *reared up*, put together. . . . *the cloud*. As in hot climates the dazzling rays of the sun are agreeably tempered and veiled by clouds, the Deity is symbolized as veiling in clouds his intense glory, which no man can look on (Ex. xvi. 10; Ps. xviii. 11, 12). Thus the visible sign of the Divine presence was a column of cloud (xiv. 14; Ex. xiv. 19, 20, 24; xxxiii. 9, 10; xl. 34; Neh. ix. 12, 19; Ps. lxxviii. 14; cv. 39; Is. iv. 5; Eze. x. 3, 4; 1 Cor. x. 1). *covered*, ordinary Heb. word for cloud = covering. . . . *tent . testimony*, i. e. T. in which the testimony was kept; and by which Jehovah bore testimony to his people. . . . *even* = evening (A.S. *æfan*). . . . *appearance . fire*. The cloud became luminous (Mic. vii. 8). Hence the better seen (*v.* 21). Reminding of a Divine sentinel and guard (Ps. cxxi. 3, 4). . . . *until . morning*. When the luminous appearance departed yet the cloud
- 16 remained. . . . *always*, in all their wilderness life. An image of the
- 17 unchanging faithfulness of God. . . . *when*, not till then (x. 11, 33, 34; Ex. xl. 36, 38; Ps. lxxx. 1, 2; Is. xlix. 10; Jo. x. 3, 5, 9). . . . *taken up*: ascended, not disappearing, but advancing. . . . *then*, knowing it was the signal to march (Prov. iii. 6). . . . *abode*, rested. . . . *pitched . tents*: rearing the tabernacle beneath the cloud, and their own tents about the T. in
- 18 the order of the encampment. . . . *commandment*. The removal of the cloud being the commandment. It is not always a word—written or spoken—that is needed to say, “This is the way, walk thou therein.” Events are sometimes the indications of the mind of God. . . . *pitched* =
- 19 encamped. . . . *tarried*, remained (W. *tarian* = to strike against anything; to stop. Lat. *tardare* = to delay). . . . *charge*. Watch. Prob. there were watchers appointed, who relieved each other night and day. . . .
- 20 *journeyed not*, but patiently waited the Lord’s time. . . . *few days*. “My times are in thy hand.” If God tarried they were to be patient: if he hastened the march they were not to be impatient; but were to be disciplined to a harmony with the will of God. . . . *day . night*. Whatever the hour, they were to feel it was right, and always be ready to go or stay.
- 22 *days . month . year*. Hence their stay in various places would be of
- 23 different length. Sometimes a whole year. . . . *hand of Moses*. He only executed the Divine will. Happy is that people whose leaders seek to do the will of God!

“Guide me, O thou great Jehovah!
 Pilgrim through this barren land;
 I am weak, but thou art mighty,
 Hold me with thy powerful hand:
 Bread of heaven!
 Feed me till I want no more.

Open thou the crystal fountain
 Whence the healing streams do flow:
 Let the fiery, cloudy pillar
 Lead me all my journey through:
 Strong Deliverer!
 Be thou still my strength and shield.”
 (Williams.)

Emblem of the Truth—Symbol of Providence—Type of Christ.

I. AN EMBLEM OF DIVINE TRUTH. (1.) In its *origin*. Supernatural. Not the flashing up of any altar fire, or the ascending of incense smoke. The truth, not the offspring of human reason or genius. (2.) In its *stability*. Only a cloud, yet no wind could drive it away, no star-lit night eclipse its brightness. (3.) In its *adaptation*. Suited to day or night, as the truth is to times of joy or sorrow. Veiled to suit feeble vision. When the night of adversity is darkest, then the promises of the Word shine brightest. (4.) In its *reliableness*. Always a safe guide. Not to be misunderstood by those who desired to know the right way (Prov. vi. 22, 23). Wayfaring man need not err.

“Dark is my journeying, Storm-clouds their shadows fling: Star of my God! Thanks that thy blessed light Shines through the shades of night Over the sod!	Surely the future span Cannot be darker than Paths I have trod. Thanks that thy blessed light Shines through the shades of night, Lantern of God!”
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II. A SYMBOL OF PROVIDENCE. (1.) *Different in appearance to different characters*. The cloud was dark to Egypt, but bright to Israelites. To the child of God there is always a bright light in the darkest cloud. (2.) *Alternation of appearance*. The same pillar now cloudy, now fiery; same providence now dark, now luminous. (3.) *Mysterious in its movements*. Sometimes long delaying to move, and often moving in an unexpected direction. (4.) *Securing all under its care*. Those were safe who patiently waited the cloud's stay, and who humbly followed the cloud's guidance.

III. A TYPE OF CHRIST. (1.) *In nature mysterious*. Cloud and fire. None could explain when it came, nor how produced. “Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh.” (2.) *In appearance commanding*. Eyes of all turned towards the cloud. How many are now “looking unto Jesus.” (3.) *In purpose beneficent*. He is a leader to his people. Leads them in a right way. (4.) *In presence so cheering*. “In darkest shades,” &c. Light in the saddest home, if Jesus enter (*ill.* the cottage in Bethany: the house of Jairus). (5.) *In attachment so constant*. The cloudy pillar did not leave them till their wandering was over. “Whom he loved he loved to the end.” “Lo! I am with you alway.” “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.”

LEARN—

- I. Take God for your guide, “He shall choose your inheritance.”
- II. Cloud dark to the Egyptians; so providence, &c., opposed to the wicked.
- III. Seek to be on the right side of the cloud.
- IV. Patiently wait for, or diligently follow the leading of God.

B.C. 1490. Num. xi. 21—35.

- 21 *Moses said*, in reply to the Divine promise (v. 18—20). He staggered through unbelief. Thought it a most unlikely thing that so many should be fed with flesh in such a wilderness. . . . *six hundred thousand*, in round numbers. There were indeed more (i. 46; ii. 32; Ex. xii. 37; xxxviii. 26). Some had been cut off for their sins (Ex. xxxii. 28), and slain in battle (less. 58, 62). . . . *footmen*, men able to carry arms. Besides these there were the women and children. . . . *thou said*. And because *He* had said so, it would come to pass. . . . *whole month*. They had once been so
- 22 feasted for a day (Ex. xvi. 13). . . . *flocks . herds . slain*. These were needed for other uses—as sacrifices, &c.; could not be spared for food, and besides, would not feed so great a multitude long. . . . *shall . fish*. They were now prob. near the E limb of the R. Sea = the gulf of Akabar. The
- 23 view of the distant sea may have suggested this to Moses. . . . *hand waxed short* = is the Lord's power diminished? Is it not the same hand that wrought wonders in the field of Zoan? His power unchangeable and
- 24 unlimited. . . . *see*, and the sight shall shame thy unbelief. . . . *went out*, overwhelmed with the revelation of this new wonder. . . . *told . people*, with whom he communicated through the elders. . . . *the seventy* (v. 16), appointed by Divine command to share the toil of governing the people.
- 25 *round . tabernacle*, near the cloud of the Divine presence. . . . *came down* (xii. 5; Ps. xcix. 7; Lu. ix. 34, 35). . . . *took . spirit*, not away from Moses, but took a measure of the same spirit of power and wisdom. . . . *seventy*. So called from their office as well as their number. The whole seventy were not here. . . . *prophesied*. Taught, instructed, expounded
- 26 the will of God. . . . *two . men*, belonging to the seventy. . . . *El'ad* = whom God loves = Theophilus. . . . *Medad* = love. . . . *spirit . them*. The Spirit not confined to place or persons. . . . *written*, as belonging to the body of elders. . . . *ran . told*. Thinking it a surprising, and
- 28 perhaps a wrong thing. . . . *Joshua . said*. Being jealous for the honour of God, and the authority of Moses and the elders. . . . *forbid*. They are
- 29 not duly authorized. . . . *Enviest . my sake*. This at least a good feature in the zeal of Joshua, that he did not envy these men on his own account (1 Cor. iii. 3, 21; xiii. 4; Phil. ii. 3; Jas. iii. 14, 15; iv. 5; v. 9; 1 Pet. ii. 1). . . . *would God, &c.* That all might preach and practise the truth (Ac. xxvi. 29; 1 Cor. xiv. 15; Phil. i. 15—18). . . . *spirit . them*. With-
- 30 out which their prophesying would be of little good. . . . *into . camp*, to
- 31 prophesy. . . . *wind . Lord*. Strong. Efficacious. From the right quarter (Ps. cxxxv. 7). . . . *quails* (*Coturnix daactylisonans*), birds resembling the partridge, but smaller. They were probably migrating northwards when the "wind" met them, and drove them wearied round the camp. The Heb. word trans. quail is *sēlāv*. The Arab word this day for the quail is *selaw*. This identifies the quail with the creature named in the text. . . . *two cubits high*: beaten down by the wind, they flew faintly, so near the ground as this. They might therefore be easily caught. . . .
- 32 *homers* (less. 57). . . . *they spread*: stripped and drawn, they were laid on
- 33 the hot sands and bare rocks to dry. . . . *while . flesh, &c.* (see v. 20). . . .
- 34 *Kibroth-hattaavah* = the graves of lust (xxxiii. 16; Deut. ix. 22; 1 Cor. x. 6). . . . *Hazeroth* (= villages). It is thought to be at 'Ain el-Hudarah, about 18 hours N.E. from Sinai.

 Israel's Complaint—Moses' Perplexity—God's Providence.

- I. ISRAEL'S COMPLAINT. (1.) *Its object was food.* "Who shall give us flesh to eat?" (v. 4). An apparently impossible thing in that "great and terrible wilderness," where there was small sign of animal life. (2.) *Its nature was intense.* "Fell a lusting." An intense desire for animal food. (3.) *It was general.* "The mixt multitude" were all clamorous. (4.) *It was accompanied with tears.* Of faint, weary, disappointed people. Tears, chiefly, of discontent. (5.) *It was associated with the retrospections of memory.* "We remember," &c. (v. 5). They should also have remembered some other things of that past. Their bondage, &c. (6.) *It made present things distasteful.* "There is nothing at all." There was a time when they did not call the manna *nothing*. Longing for what we have not, tends to cause disparagement of things possessed.
- II. MOSES' PERPLEXITY. Great popular leaders have often been perplexed by the unreasonable clamours of their followers. Have often been urged farther than their greater prudence and wisdom would have chosen. People have often damaged their own cause by exorbitant demands. The multitude often see less of the prudent and the possible than the enlightened few. (1.) Moses displeased at the position in which he found himself ("My wretchedness," v. 15). His faith faltered (vv. 11, 12). Especially displeased with the people (v. 10). (2.) In his perplexity cried to the Lord. A good example. God "a present help in trouble." (3.) He acknowledges his own weakness (vv. 21, 22). He could not feed the people. It would be suicidal to kill the flocks and herds, even if they were enough. Needed for sacrifice; and the religious well-being of the people, of most importance. (4.) He receives comfort and direction (v. 23).
- III. GOD'S PROVIDENCE. Nature is his store-house, in which he has garnered food for man and beast. He made all living things. Endowed them with habits and instincts. Made the quails. Ordained their migratory habits. Made and ruled the winds. "Stormy wind fulfilling his word." "God moves in a mysterious way" (*Comper*). "O God of Bethel, by whose hand" (*Doddridge*). "For mercies countless as the sand" (*Newton*). "When all thy mercies, O my God" (*Addison*). When the quails came, the wind was ready. It fulfilled the word of God. The wonderful flight of birds. The scene in the camp. What was sent so abundantly seems to have been thanklessly received. Divine anger went with the gift. Many of the people died. "Eternal God, we look to thee" (*Merrick*). "Thy providence is kind and large" (*Watts*).

LEARN—

- I. To pray for the blessing of contentment.
- II. To seek the moderation of our desires.
- III. To pray for grateful hearts.
- IV. To acknowledge the hand of God in the supply of our wants.
- V. To be chiefly anxious for the supply of spiritual need.

B.C. 1490. Num. xii. 1—16.

- 1 *Miriam*. She is named first, because she took the lead, spoke first, longest, or most violently. . . . *spake against*, disparagingly. *Those* spake who should have known better, and against *one* whose character should have been sacred to all, especially to M. and A. Nothing said of their speaking first to him, before they spoke *against* him (Matt. xviii. 15—17). . . . *Ethiopian* = Cushite. Some (*K. D.*) think this was a second wife of Moses, because (1.) She is called a Cushite; (2.) The case of Zipporah was so long past. But the occasion of this sedition points to Zipporah. Through Z.'s relatives, at the first, the '*seventy*' were appointed (Ex. xviii.). M. and A. were jealous of their rising influence; and of those (the family of Z.) who suggested their appointment. . . . *married*. They prob. referred to it as illegal, forgetting (1.) That it took place before any law of marriage was passed; (2.) That she was not a Canaanite, against whom exclusively the law was passed (Deut. vii. 3); (3.) That Moses had been a long
- 2 time separated from Z. . . . *said*, i. e. this was the substance of their evil speaking. They tried to exalt themselves, by depreciating their brother. *only*, perhaps not, but chiefly. . . . *also*, yes, but very subordinately. . . . *heard*. He hears all such evil speaking. Let this comfort those who are slandered. If *they* do not hear the backbiter, their almighty friend does.
- 3 *meek*. Hence did not himself resent the evil. He patiently endured. . . .
- 4 *Lord* (Ps. lxxvi. 2). . . . *came out*. The Lord would settle this question
- 5 himself. . . . *called A. and M.* How must their fear have been excited.
- 6 *prophet*, such as you are. . . . *vision . dream*. This shall be honour
- 7 enough for an ordinary prophet. . . . *not so*, not an ordinary prophet. *faithful* (1 Cor. iv. 2; 1 Tim. iii. 15; Heb. iii. 2—6; 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5).
- 8 *house*, affairs of Israel. . . . *mouth* (xiv. 14; Ex. xxxiii. 11; Deut. xxxiv. 10; 1 Tim. vi. 16), familiarly. . . . *apparently*, distinctly. . . . *dark speeches*, not by parables. . . . *similitude*, appearance, symbol. . . . *wherefore then*, seeing I have put this special honour upon him. . . . *afraid*. The reason of their boldness was that they thought more of the meekness of M. than of the anger of God. . . . *servant*, who has honoured me, and whom I will
- 9 honour. . . . *kindled*, quickened into life. . . . *departed*, having thus spoken,
- 10 and executed his wrath. . . . *Miriam*, the chief conspirator. . . . *became*, suddenly! . . . *leprous*, afflicted with this dire disease, which disqualified her for associating with the people. She was a public mark of Divine
- 11 anger. What might others expect if even M. was not spared. . . . *my lord*: addresses as his superior the man he had depreciated. . . . *foolishly*: all
- 12 sin is folly; as goodness is the highest wisdom. . . . *one dead*, with certain death before her, and cut off from the joys, &c., of life. . . . *Moses cried*. The injured man becomes intercessor. Forgiveness of injuries (Matt. vi. 6—15; Lu. xxiii. 34; Ac. vii. 60). A brother praying for a sister. . . .
- 14 *father . spit*, even then she would be considered disgraced and unclean, and be therefore ashamed; how much more with this mark of Divine con-
- 15 tempt and anger upon her. . . . *was shut out*. The whole camp should reject one to whom they had listened, and regard her as unclean instead of as their leader. . . . *journeyed not till*. And doubtless understood that their delay was the effect of her sin, and theirs in hearkening to her. . . .
- 16 *afterward*. Miriam having returned humbled to the camp. . . . *Hazereth* (less. 70). . . . *Paran* (= region with caverns), S. and S.E. of Palestine. Three days' march from Sinai, now called *el-Tih* (Deut. xxxiii. 2; Hab. iii. 3; 1 Sam. xxv. 1; 1 Ki. xi. 18).

Miriam's Sin—Detection—Punishment.

- I. MIRIAM'S SIN. (1.) *Jealousy*. Wished to have supreme power in the camp, and influence with Moses. Was jealous of the influence of Jethro's family, and of the elders, who had been chosen through Jethro's advice. (2.) *Envy*. Desired to share in, or monopolize, the homage that Moses received. (3.) *Evil-speaking*. Privately sought to undermine the power of Moses among the people. Had nothing to say about Moses himself. Invented tales concerning his wife, from whom he had been long separated. (4.) *Folly*. Could she have succeeded in destroying the power of Moses, she would have failed in getting them to recognize her as their leader. She did not see that she shone in the borrowed light of her great brother. (5.) *Rebellion against God*. Moses was the servant of God: to resist him was to resist the Master. (6.) *Vain excuses*. "Because," and because. . . Sinners are often prolific in *excuses*; called by them *reasons*.
- II. MIRIAM'S DETECTION. "*And the Lord heard it.*" Moses may have heard of it. This seems to be implied by the allusion to his meekness (*v.* 3). (If the Lord hear, then no sin passes undetected.) Moses gave himself no concern about it. Could Miriam meet her brother without shame? The Lord spake suddenly. Imagine the confusion of Miriam and Aaron. "*They three came out.*" Their different feelings. Miriam's conscience must have anticipated some disclosure of her guilt. God pronounced Moses "*faithful.*" What must Miriam have thought of *her faithfulness*? She must have felt that detection followed the sin immediately.
- III. MIRIAM'S PUNISHMENT. She was smitten with leprosy, and under circumstances that much heightened the effect of the punishment. (1.) It was in the presence of the person she had injured. (2.) In the presence of her fellow conspirators. (3.) By the great God, against whose authority she had rebelled. (4.) Was excluded from the camp publicly. (5.) Humbled, by being cleansed in answer to the prayer of him she had wronged. People shrink from slanderers, as from moral lepers. Such should be put out of the camp till the leprosy is cleansed. *Leprosy* was so foul and fatal a disease, that the Jews called it the stroke of God (*L. B.* 651—654).
- LEARN—I. The great sin of evil speaking. Especially against ministers of religion, whose influence for good ought to be preserved not only by themselves, but by all about them. The character of public men is their strength. Destroy their character, their power is gone. By this loss the public itself is impoverished and injured. Hence such slander is suicidal.
- II. God the defender of his servants. The severe punishment—and upon no other than Miriam—shows the divine abhorrence of the sin.
- III. Moses, leaving the exposure and punishment with God, and interceding for Miriam, teaches us how to regard attacks upon our character, and act under them; and towards such unhappy offenders.

B.C. 1490. Num. xiii. 16—33.

- 17 *Jehoshua*: full form of Joshua. . . . *Moses sent*, by command of God (v. 2, 3) and wish of the people (Deut. i. 22—29). . . . *spy*, search, examine. . . . *southward*, i. e. into the S. of Canaan. . . . *mountain*, i. e. the hilly region of the S. . . . *land*, whether fruitful or no. . . . *people*, their numbers and strength. . . . *cities*, if the people be stationary. . . . *tents*, if they be pastoral and migratory. . . . *strong holds*, if they be warlike. . . .
- 20 *fat*. *lean*, suitable or not for pasturage and tillage. . . . *wood*, for building, and fruit trees, as palm. . . . *good courage*. On so perilous an expedition they needed encouragement. . . . *fruit*, as a sample. . . . *time*, &c. End
- 21 of July or beg. of August (*R. B. R.* ii. 100, 611). . . . *Zin* (= the low palm-tree), now the Wady Murreh in S. frontier of Canaan. . . . *Rehob* (= broad place), in extreme N. of Canaan, nr. Lebanon. Afterwards given to Asher (Ju. i. 31; xviii. 28). . . . *Hamath* (= fortress). "The entrance of H." often mentioned as N. boundary of Palestine (xxxiv. 9; Jos. xiii. 5). (*R.* was situated on the N. road, which leads to H.) . . . *ascended*, on their return. . . . *Hebron*, where Abraham dwelt, and Sarah died (Gen. xiii. 18; xxiii. 2—19; less. 12). . . . *Akiman* (= brother of a gift, Josh. xv. 14; Ju. i. 10). . . . *Sheshai* (= whitish?). . . . *Talmai* (= furrowed). *Anak* (= long-necked, a giant), S. of Arba (Deut. ix. 2; Jos. xv. 13, 14; xxi. 11; Ju. i. 20). . . . *Zoan* (= low region? place of departure?) called by Greeks, *Tanis*, the Avaris of Egyptian history (*S. B. D.* iii. 1855). Sit. on E. side of the Tanitic arm of the Nile (Ps. lxxviii. 12—43; Isa. xix. 11, 13; xxx. 4; Eze. xxx. 14). . . . *brook*, or valley. . . . *Eshcol* (= a cluster), prob. nr. Hebron. . . . *between two*, because of its size, and to preserve from injury. Grapes of Palestine red; clusters sometimes weigh from 10 to 12 lbs.
- 25 *after forty days*. They would therefore return at end of Aug. or in Sept.
- 26 *Kadesh* (= sacred, or Kadesh-barnea = sacred desert of wandering), now 'Ain el-Kadeis, E.S.E. of Moilâhi (= Beerlahai-roi) (*Williams's Holy City*, i. 466—468). . . . *milk*. *honey*, fig. = herbage, fruit, flowers. . . .
- 28 *this*. *fruit*, a proof of the truth of what we say. . . . *Nevertheless*. Unlike the great teacher, they saved the worst till the last. . . . *strong*, in numbers and position. . . . *walled*. Israel had no engines of war. . . . *of Anak*, a gigantic race. . . . *Amalekites* (Gen. xiv. 7), a nomad people, rich in flocks and herds. . . . *Hittites*, desc. fr. Heth, s. of Canaan (Gen. x. 5), dwelt in S. of Canaan. . . . *Jebusites*, desc. fr. Canaan (Gen. x. 16), dwelt nr. Jerusalem. . . . *Amorites* (= mountaineers). . . . *Canaanites* (= lowlanders). . . . *Caleb*. Joshua also (xiv. 6—12). . . . *stilled*, calmed their excitement and fear. . . . *once*, be prompt and resolute. . . . *possess*. He spoke not of any fighting. . . . *well able*, having courage and numbers; and the best of all is, God is with us. They had already fought and defeated the Amalekites (Ex. xvii. 8—16; Deut. xxv. 17—19; less. 58). . . .
- 31 *up with him*, except Joshua, i. e. the other ten spies (Josh. xiv. 6—8). . . . *not able*, of themselves they were not. These spies spoke of the enemy,
- 32 but not of the Divine helper. . . . *evil report*. Not in all things necessarily untrue, but by exaggeration of the evil, and concealment of the truth, the report was evil. . . . *cateth. inhabitants*. By this they prob. meant that the people wasted away in contending for its possession (*K. D.*). Climate pestilential (*Calvin*). . . . *saw*, with eyes that magnified every evil, and diminished every good. . . . *giants*. *grasshoppers*. The one as true and as untrue as the other. [See xiv. 1; these ill-tidings threw the people into despair.]

Their Selection—Commission—Journey—Report.

- I. THEIR SELECTION. (1.) One from each tribe. That each tribe, without preference or distinction, might be represented, each tribe sent a pair of vigilant eyes into the land to spy out, for the rest. Each spy, on his return, might report, through heads of families, to his own tribe. (2.) Each was a man of mark. "Every one a ruler." "Heads of the children of Israel." Men of judgment and discretion. This the more needful :—(a.) Because the journey was perilous. (b.) Because the object was important. Men able to judge of the soil, and inhabitants. (3.) They were chosen and sent by Moses. Their various characters prove the impartiality of Moses. He could doubtless have found in each tribe a man after his own heart. Probably he allowed the people of each tribe to have a voice in the matter.
- II. THEIR COMMISSION. (1.) They were to spy out the *whole* land. Not to give a report upon some few favourable or unfavourable aspects of it. (2.) They were to observe the *people*, and note especially their numbers, character, habits, and strength. (3.) They were to bring particulars of the *dwellings* of the people ; whether cities, tents, or otherwise. From this, their habits and power of resistance might be inferred. (4.) They were carefully to examine the *soil*, whether fit for pasturage or tillage, whether it was fat or lean. (5.) To confirm and illustrate what they might say of the soil, they were to bring of the *fruit* of the land. (6.) They were to be fearless. God would have them in His keeping.
- III. THEIR JOURNEY. (1.) In the glorious *summer-time*, thus commissioned, they set out on their enterprise. Time when the country looked most beautiful. (2.) They passed up through the *whole* country, from the south to the extreme north ; even to Hamath. (3.) Returning, they visited *Hebron*. Should not the remembrance of him who dwelt there (Abraham) have encouraged them to believe in their conquest of the country ? Hebron should have brought to mind the Divine promise to Abraham. (4.) At a place afterwards called Eshcol (the place of grapes, or the cluster), they cut down a large bunch of grapes ; and collecting also some figs and pomegranates, they returned with much information after 40 days.
- IV. THEIR REPORT. (1.) Things in which they *agreed*. Concerning the country, soil, fruit, people. They showed the fruit they had brought. (2.) Things about which they *differed*. Their ability to conquer this wonderful country. (3.) *Effect* of their representations. (a.) *Immediate*. People discouraged and tumultuous (*v.* 30 ; *xiv.* 1—5). They began to rebel. Were for returning to Egypt. (b.) *Ultimate*. Delayed the stay in the desert, and the conquest of Canaan for many years. (4.) Only Joshua and Caleb faithful ; these were silenced and out-voted. Minorities have often been in the right. (III. Early days of Christianity, Reformation, &c.) Reason :—goodness and wisdom generally with the few.

B.C. 1489. Num. xvi. 1—35.

- 1 *Korah* (= ice, hail, or baldness), a Levite (*Core*, Jude 11); desc. called Korathites (xxvi. 58), or Korhites (1 Ch. xii. 6, &c.); (reputed authors of Pss. xlii., xliv.—xlix., lxxxiv., lxxxv., lxxxvii., lxxxviii.). Named first, and prob. chief conspirator. . . . *son* . *Izhar*, and since I. was brother of Amram (Ex. vi. 18), K. was related to Moses (Matt. x. 36). . . . *Dathan* (= belonging to a fountain); (xxvi. 9; Deut. xi. 6; Ps. cvi. 17). . . . *Abiram* (= father of renown). . . . *On* (= strength). Not again mentioned. Probably separated from the rest and did not perish with them. . . . *took men*, or counsel, or courage; 'men' being in *italics*. . . . *rose up*, their plans being ripe. . . . *two hundred and fifty princes*: a formidable rebellion in numbers and influence. These would each have many followers. . . . *renown*, fame and influence. . . . *against Moses*. *Aaron*, against magistracy and ministry. Levellers (*Trapp*). . . . *Ye take*. It was God who put it on him. Moses had himself secured 70 others to help him. He might have had sole power. . . . *all* . *holy*. So they said, but God disproved their words. . . . *lift* . *up*. Moses was meek, and God lifted him up; they were proud, and God cast them down (Prov. xvi. 18; Lu. xiv. 11). . . . *face*, to expostulate with Korah, or intercede with God. . . . *Lord* . *shew*. Let him decide, not man. . . . *This do*: to decide the matter. . . . *censers*. They might have remembered Nadab, &c., less. 65. . . . *ye take*, &c.: he retorts their charge (1 Ki. xviii. 17, 18). . . . *Hear*, that, if wise, ye may repent in time. . . . *small thing*, &c. It is a great honour for a sinful man to have *any* office in the Church. . . . *brought* . *near*, that ought to be enough of duty, responsibility, privilege. . . . *against him*. For *He* has ordained what you oppose. . . . *not come*, they cast off his authority. . . . *make thyself*. They forget God. . . . *not brought*, &c. It was they who refused to advance (Ex. xiv. 3—10). . . . *put out*, Heb. = bore out. Are we to follow thee blindly? . . . *wroth*. Well he might be at their unjust suspicions. . . . *not taken*, though he might have demanded payment for his time and work. . . . *neither* . *hurt*. Why, then, should they think he would now? . . . *said*, referring the case to Divine arbitration. . . . *two hundred and fifty*; he had no fear of number. . . . *Aaron*, only one against many (1 Ki. xviii. 22). . . . *they took*, accepting the challenge. . . . *glory*. *appeared*. None should doubt who settled the question. . . . *spake*, out of the Shekinah. . . . *consume*. Moses evidently expected some other intimation of the Divine will. . . . *fell*, &c.: though injured, they were forgiving. . . . *Lord*, would not be diverted. . . . *congregation*, perhaps some would have suffered but for Moses' intercession. . . . *elders*, to lend him aid and countenance. . . . *touch nothing*. Thus protest against their wickedness, and admit the rectitude of the punishment. . . . *stood*, wondering, scoffing, per. fearing. . . . *Hereby*. To other proofs they shall have this terrible demonstration. . . . *common death*, as every man dieth. . . . *provoked*. *Lord*, who alone could do so wonderful a thing. . . . *end* . *speaking*. A fearful moment. . . . *ground*: the Lord's earth did its Maker's bidding. . . . *under them*, marking them out. There was no escape. Their panic! . . . *swallowed them*, as cumberers of the ground. The men who would do without Moses, are now done without themselves. *houses*, tents, families. . . . *men* . *appertained*, adhered to the cause of, . . . *Korah*, who probably was destroyed by fire with the two hundred and fifty whom (v. 19) he had gathered together. . . . *alive*, fearful death! . . . *fled*, appalled and conscience-stricken.

The Rebels—their Sin—their Punishment.

- I. THE REBELS. (1.) *Influential*. Korah, a Levite (Dathan and Abiram, Reubenites), the rest princes and men of renown. Distinguished men of other tribes, who would use their influence among their tribes. Their influence strong in proportion to the disaffection of the people. (2.) *Numerous*. K., D., A. were the arch-conspirators. Besides these, 250 who were also ringleaders. Probably many others were willing to support them. Doubtless they had discovered their strength before they took the first overt action. (3.) *Deluded*: (a.) Concerning Moses, whom they asserted, wrongly, was a self-elected leader and an arbitrary prince. (b.) Concerning the people, whom they assumed (v. 14) would have willingly followed Moses to the promised land, had he tried to lead them thither. Self-deceived, and deceiving others. With what promises did they beguile the people? Would they lead them back, as the people wished? (xiii. 4); or forward, whither they desired not to go? Were they not already blind, without losing their eyes (v. 14), and leaders of the blind?
- II. THEIR SIN. Rebellion against the authority of God which was vested in Moses. (1.) *Cause in Korah*, see iii. 30; whence it appears, that for some unexplained cause a younger relative was appointed to the headship of the Kohathites. K. was descended from the second son of Kohath (vi. 18), while the present head was descended from the fourth son. (2.) *Cause in Dathan and Abiram*. The priesthood transferred from the first-born of every family to one particular tribe, and that a branch of the house of Moses. But this was done by command of God, not of Moses alone. (3.) *Cause in the 250*. Their own assumed rights might be interfered with, so they thought. (4.) *Cause in their followers*. General dissatisfaction. They charged upon Moses the effects of their own wilfulness. Pride in all of them. Thus Pope says:—
- “Men would be angels, angels would be gods:
Aspiring to be gods, if angels fell—
Aspiring to be angels, men rebel.”
- III. THEIR PUNISHMENT. (1.) *Of Divine selection*. Left on both sides to Divine arbitration. On the part of the rebels, a defiance; on the side of Moses, humble agreement. (2.) *Manifest*. All should see it, and know thereby the Divine will. (3.) *Of Divine infliction*. God took the matter into his own hands. It was a rebellion against Him, more than Moses. (4.) *Terrible*. Imagine the scene. Horror with which they saw the ground close over these shrieking men, &c. (5.) *Complete*. All pertaining to them perished. God could do without men who had thought so much of themselves.
- LEARN—I. “Our God is a consuming fire.” “A fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”
- II. Beware of resisting Divine authority. “How shall ye escape,” &c.
- III. Have we not all rebelled?
- IV. God was in Christ, making reconciliation, &c.

 B.C. 1489. Num. xvii. 1—13.

It is important to read and note carefully xvi. 36—50; whence it appears (com. v. 41 with v. 49) that the rebellion for which K., D., and A. were punished as ringleaders, had very widely spread. Desire of the priestly office of which K. &c. took advantage was mainly the cause of that rebellion (see v. 40); yet the disaffected called K. and his followers, "the people of the Lord" (v. 41); and of these disaffected 14,700 were slain by a plague. To settle whom God had chosen as priest, a new wonder follows:—

- 1 *And*, to prevent any dispute in the future. . . . *the Lord*, who alone could decide this question. . . . *spake* . *Moses*, whom, notwithstanding the people's gainsaying, He acknowledged as a faithful servant in his house.
- 2 *rod*, staff or sceptre, which the prince or chief of each tribe bore. . . . *twelve rods*: one for each tribe. Hence in this case Ephraim and Manasseh were reckoned as one tribe. . . . *man's name*. Names of the twelve
- 3 patriarchs. . . . *Aaron's name*, he being the representative of the tribe of
- 4 Levi, and the individual whose office was called in question. . . . *tabernacle*, the holy place. Any deception would be followed by the consuming wrath of a holy God. . . . *before* . *testimony*, as if guarded by the law, and
- 5 in the very presence of God. . . . *the rod*, known to the people by the name upon it, known to its owner also. . . . *choose*, for my priest. . . . *blossom*: without being planted or watered, having no root. . . . *make* . *cease*: murmuring shall be silenced by this miracle. . . . *from me*. As hateful to me. . . . *against you*. Thus God took his servant's part. . . .
- 6 *rod apiece*. These rods were dry sticks or wands, probably old, handed down
- 7 from a distant ancestor. . . . *And Moses*, nothing doubtful of the issue, did
- 8 as commanded. . . . *morrow*, even in so short a time. . . . *of witness*, where God bore witness to his servant. . . . *behold*, it was indeed a great wonder. *budded*: not the less miraculous for the well-known habit of the tree (*D. B. N. S. ii. 131*). The almond-tree is naturally expeditious in its development. Buds, blossoms, almonds, are found together on the same branch. [*Almond-tree, Amygdalus communis*. The Heb. name = "a waker," because it is the first of all trees to awake from the sleep of winter (*Jer. i.*
- 9 *11, 12*). . . . *looked*, for the name. . . . *took*. Not had given to them. Each found, and took his own, and held the sign of his own rejection in his hand. Aaron took his and held the sign of an accepted and fruitful
- 10 priesthood. . . . *kept* (*Heb. ix. 4*). . . . *token*, sign, remembrance. . . . *against rebels*: tokens of mercy and sin there laid up together. . . . *die not*, the only alternative. They had had many illustrations of the effects of murmuring. They knew what they might expect unless they were
- 11 submissive. . . . *did so*: stored up the rod, and told the people the deter-
- 12 mination of God. . . . *Behold, we die*. They had found out how prone they were to murmur. Looked upon it as impossible but that they would mur-
- 13 mur; and hence regarded their destruction as inevitable. . . . *Whosoever*, for even the princes had perished. . . . *any thing near*. Even though they should not transgress by offering incense. Now they rush into the other extreme. Yet their fear was salutary. Better that they should fear too much, than too little or not at all. Better still to have fear changed into love. "Perfect love casteth out fear."

Instructive to Israelites—Suggestive to Christians—Typical of Christ—
Symbolical of a True Teacher.

Aaron's rod considered as :—

- I. INSTRUCTIVE TO THE ISRAELITES. (1.) An end hereby put to murmuring. By an incontrovertible sign they knew who was the true priest. (2.) A preventative furnished against future rebellion. Miracles apt to be forgotten ; of this the evidence was to be preserved. Kept for a token.
- II. SUGGESTIVE TO CHRISTIANS. Every man has some *rod* on which he leans. The Christian's is *faith*. Like Aaron's rod, faith *flourishes*, —(1.) *Most in the sanctuary*. There are strengthening influences, and a Divine power. It will become a barren stock elsewhere. (2.) *Under circumstances in which other rods cannot live*. The almond flourishes, even before the winter is fully past. Faith budding in adversity. (3.) *Produces fruit and flowers on the bare stock of adversity*. Buds and fruit, on a dry stock.

“The hope, in dreams of a happier hour,
That alights on misery's brow ;
Springs out of the silvery almond flower,
That blooms on a leafless bough.”

When all else fails, faith says, “Though he slay me,” &c. (4.) *Bears fruit speedily, when God causes his blessing to rest upon it*. “Believe and be saved.” (5.) *Stirs the Christian up to vigilance*. Almond-tree a symbol of watchfulness.

- III. TYPICAL OF CHRIST. (1.) *For it is perpetual*. Aaron's rod laid up as a lasting remembrance. (2.) *It bore fruit on a barren stock*. Jesus, a root out of a dry ground. (3.) *It was distinguished among the sceptres of the princes*. Christ's kingdom and sceptre rule over all. He is a plant of renown. (4.) *It was the object of special favour*. So in Jesus, He “was well pleased.” He was “elect and precious.”
- IV. SYMBOLICAL OF A TRUE TEACHER. (1.) His home the house of God. (2.) Presents himself constantly before the testimony. (3.) In himself dry and barren. (4.) Relies upon God for fruitfulness. (5.) Produces by Divine help not flowers only, but fruit also. (6.) As a dry and lifeless stock he receives quickening power from God ; so with his flowers and fruit he presents himself before God, and offers all his works to Him. (Apply this to S. S. teachers.)

LEARN—

- I. The wisdom of God in choice of methods.
- II. To seek a strong, and living, and practical faith.
- III. To rejoice in and rely upon the perpetual high-priesthood of Christ.
- IV. To endeavour, like the almond-tree, to bring forth fruit early.

B.C. 1452. Num. xx. 14—29.

- 14 *Kadesh* (less. 72). . . *Edom* (= red), country settled by descendants of Esau, whose five sons (Gen. xxxvi. 4, 5) expanded into 13 families (xxxvi. 9—14). As eight kings are enumerated (xxxvi. 31—39) besides dukedoms (vv. 40—43), it is clear that Edom was at this time a powerful state. . . *brother Israel*. Plea of relationship. Often, alas! one of the weakest that can be urged. . . *all . travel*. Their past hardships and history; and their long and toilsome journey, which might thus, at the end, be shortened.
- 15 *our fathers*, the twelve patriarchs and their houses (Gen. xli. 6; Ac. vii. 15). . . *vexed*, painfully entreated. . . *cried* (Ex. ii. 23, 24, &c.). . . *angel*, messenger. Moses. Pillar of cloud (Ex. iii. 2—6; xiv. 19; xxiii. 20; xxiii. 2). . . *pray thee*, a most conciliatory, courteous, and brotherly appeal. . . *country*, kingdom. . . *not . fields*, cultivated parts, to trample on, or otherwise damage the crops. . . *vineyards*, to injure or pluck the fruit. . . *water . wells*, a stipulation of great importance, where the people depend for the greater part of the year on the water collected in the rainy season. . . *high way*, the common road for travellers. . . *Edom said*, churlishly, unlike the speech of a relative. . . *sword*. He threatened armed resistance. . . *Israel said*, again urging their case. . . *pay*, not take by force. . . *go through*, not remain in. . . *came out* (Ob. 10, 15), with an armed force towards Kadesh. . . *turned away* (Deut. ii. 4, 8, 27, 29; xxiii. 7; Jud. xi. 18, 24), though they might have forced a passage.
- 22 Respecting a tie, that Edom did not acknowledge. . . *Hor* (= mountain), E. of the Arabah (i. e. the valley between the Dead Sea and Gulf of Akabah). A conspicuous mt, W. of city of Petra. 4800 ft high. Of sandstone, having a double summit. It is *supposed* that Aaron died in the hollow, between the peaks. On the highest is a building 28 ft by 33 ft inside; having two apartments, in the lower of which is a recess, regarded as the tomb of A. (Scene from summit, *S. S. P.* 87.) . . . *Lord spake*. A most affecting preparation for a most solemn event. . . *Moses . Aaron*, two old men. Brothers. M. 119, A. 122 years of age. . . *in . Hor*, in view of,
- 24 or on borders of. . . *gathered . people*, i. e. shall die. *His* people were those who had gone home, not those on the march. They are *our* people. Our home is with *them*, with others we are as strangers. . . *because* (iv. 27, *marg.*; Deut. xxxii. 50). “*Time* hastened by Divine displeasure, manner arranged in tenderness of love, to do him honour at the close of his earthly service” (*P. C.* 101). . . *his son*. To witness his father’s death, and receive the insignia of the office he left. . . *strip . garments*, and of the priesthood also. Not so our High Priest (see Heb. vii. 23, 24; viii. 1). *gathered, &c.* If “gathered to his people” meant simply “he shall die,” it would hardly be added, “and he shall die there.” It meant, he shall go home to the faithful departed, and in order to this he must die (for see 1
- 27 Cor. xv. 50). . . *Moses did*. In duties painful or pleasant he obeyed God.
- 28 *stripped*. He must join his people as a human brother, not as a priest. Such a priest not needed whither he was going. . . *came down*, Eleazar to enter upon his new duties; Moses soon to climb another mt, and be
- 29 gathered to *his* people. . . *mourned*, as they well might. A great man was lost to Israel. . . *even all*. For each had lost a priest.

“Jesus our Priest for ever lives,
To plead for us above;
Jesus our King for ever gives
The blessings of his love.

“God hath pronounced a firm decree,
Nor changes what he swore:—
Eternal shall thy priesthood be,
When Aaron is no more.”—(*Watts.*)

Time—Warning—Place—Circumstances—Characteristics.

- I. **THE TIME.** In the 40th year of the wanderings. A very important year in the history of Israel. Year of death also of Miriam and of Moses. (Year of the fiery serpents; of the battles of Jahaz and Edrei; of Balak and Balaam.) Dates that mark formation of new or severance of old friendships, always important. In about the 123-4 of Aaron's life. A long and eventful life. And yet, though his life was long,—(1.) His death was hastened by sin. How often should we discover this to be the case if we knew all. Religion the best life-preserver. (2.) His death overtook him in the midst of work. Israel not yet in the promised land. Aaron to leave it on the borders. Death often calls men away from unfinished work.
- II. **THE WARNING.** Many pass away without any warning. Duty of being always ready. In this case, a solemn intimation that the time appointed had come. It was kindly framed. "Gathered unto his people." An old man's best friends—*his* people—are mostly in the better world. Aaron invited to join his people: the great ones amongst whom he ranked. The chiefs of the nation. Abraham also went to *his* fathers (Gen. xv. 15).
- III. **THE PLACE.** A mountain. Hor, *the* mountain. Reminds us that the good man in death is in death lifted up above the world; and that, as Aaron at that time, he dies in view of the Church below and the Church above. Israel around, and the promised land before him. Men have raised a monument on the mountain; but Hor is the true monument. Hor, a symbol as well as a sepulchre. Stands out of the plain with its peak heavenward, like Aaron from among men.
- IV. **THE CIRCUMSTANCES.** Toilsomely and calmly ascends the hill to be gathered to his fathers. The old man climbing the last of life's hills. The last stage a rugged one. His brother and his son with him. Has his robe taken off, and sees them placed by his aged brother on his son, and dies in "the sight of all the congregation."

"This is the time for death,
When all around is peace;
Calmly to yield the weary breath,
From sin and suffering cease:
Think of heaven's bliss, and give the sign
To parting friends—such death be mine!"—(*Montgomery.*)

- V. **THE CHARACTERISTICS.** A death,—(1.) Hastened by sin. (2.) Closing all earthly offices and distinctions. (3.) Heralded by solemn intimations. (4.) Sweetened by presence of friends.

LEARN—

- I. A good man in dying is gathered to his people.
- II. Seek to live on the borders of heaven that we may die in view of the promised land.
- III. Endeavour to do what we have to do while it is called to-day.

B.C. 1452. Num. xxi. 4—9

- 4 journeyed, after their mourning of 30 days for Aaron were ended. . . . *mt Hor*, around the base of which they were encamped (xx. 22, 23, 27; xxxiii. 41). . . . *way . Red Sea* (xiv. 25; Deut. i. 40). A glance at the map will explain this. From *mt Hor* to gulf of Akabah (Elanitic gulf of Red Sea) there extends from N. to S. the valley of Arabah. The Israelites were encamped at the N.W. extremity. Edom extended along the E. and N.E. of this valley. Not being permitted to cross the N. end of Arabah and then pass through Edom, they were compelled to journey S. down the valley, then E., and so round Edom till they reached the Jordan. *compass*, journey circuitously (xx. 18, 21; Deut. ii. 5, 8; Jud. xi. 18). *soul*, life, spirits, &c. (xxxii. 7, 9; Ex. vi. 9; Ac. xiv. 22; 1 Thess. iii. 3, 4). *discouraged*, grieved. It was longer and rougher than they expected.
- 5 *people spake*, as usual (xi. 1, 6; xiv. 1, 4; xvi. 13, 14, 41; xvii. 12; Ex. xiv. 11; xv. 24; xvi. 2, 3, 7, 8; xvii. 2, 3; Ps. lxxviii. 6; lxxviii. 9). *to die*. It was always that they might die in the wilderness, that Moses brought them from Egypt, when things went wrong. . . . *bread*, i. e. no food. . . . *water*, no drinkable water. "It is, on the whole, a horrible desert, with a loose sandy soil, and drifts of granite and other stones, where terrible sand-storms sometimes arise from the neighbourhood of the Red Sea" (*K. D.* iii. 139). . . . *light bread*, manna.
- 6 *fiery serpents*. *Species* of serpent or snake uncertain. Might be the wek snake, from 7 to 13 ft long. Schlegel saw one of 20 ft, called in India the *bora*. The word *saraph*, here trans. fiery, is used by Isaiah (xiv. 29) to denote a kind of cockatrice ("out of the serpent's—*nahash*—root shall come forth a cockatrice, and his fruit shall be a fiery flying serpent—*saraph*"). The word fiery may mean the burning and fatal effects of its poison. . . . *bit . people*. In the front of the upper jaw of *venomous* snakes are two teeth, much longer than the rest, called fangs. At the root of these are glands in which the poison is secreted. When the snake is enraged, these fangs, which at other times fold back upon the roof of the mouth, are projected downwards. A groove, extending from root to point, conducts the venom from the gland into the wound. Mixing there with the blood, it soon circulates and causes death.
- 7 *to Moses*, against whom they had murmured. . . . *sinned*: they only make confession in their suffering. . . . *pray*: they had much evidence of his willingness to intercede, and his power in prayer. . . . *and Moses*, being forgiving and loving, . . . *prayed*, at their request. . . . *people*, who had so repeatedly ill-used him.
- 8 *Lord said*. In his reply furnishing a wonderful type of the Lord Jesus Christ. . . . *make . fiery serpent*, the image of one. . . . *set . pole*. Let it be elevated, that all may see it, who will look. . . . *every one*, notwithstanding his age, rank, station. . . . *bitten*; whether just bitten, or near death. *looketh*, all that a dying man can do. . . . *live*, notwithstanding the apparent hopelessness of his state.
- 9 *of brass* (2 Ki. xviii. 4; Jo. iii. 14, 15; xii. 32; Rom. viii. 3; 2 Cor. v. 21). . . . *when . beheld* (Isa. xlv. 22; Zech. xii. 10; Jo. i. 29; Heb. xii. 2; 1 Jo. iii. 8). . . . *he lived* (Jo. vi. 40; Rom. i. 17; v. 20, 21).

A Type of Christ. (Com. Num. xxi. 9 with Jo. iii. 14, 15.)

(*Introduction.*) Sketch the scene : wide-extended plain, dotted with tents, belted by mountains. Day breaking. The manna, and the loathing. A cry is heard. It is re-echoed from other parts of the camp. *The serpents!* They creep from fissures in the hard ground, and clefts in the rocks. Crawl to the couch where the infant is sleeping, coil around the limbs of stalwart men and helpless women ; and leave the death-world behind. Moses intercedes. The brazen serpent. The command, "*Look ;*" the promise, "*Live.*" "*As Moses,*" &c.

I. As Moses lifted up the brazen serpent by Divine command, so also was it by Divine appointment that the Son of man was lifted up. People hopeless and helpless. Could not destroy the fiery serpents, nor discover antidote to the poison. Could they have discovered some expedient, they could not resolve that a *look* should be followed by a cure. But God could devise, and resolve all that was needed. So loved the world, &c., that whosoever *believeth*, &c. He alone had the right to make faith the condition of the cure, and the power to will that a cure should follow faith.

II. As Moses lifted up the brazen serpent at a time of great emergency, so also was the Son of man lifted up in the world's extremity. People despairing, dying. None to save. So with the world. False philosophy, licentious poetry, &c., &c., the numerous progeny of the old serpent, had infused their poison into the life's blood of the race. The world was never worse than when Christ came. It was when learning, &c., had exhausted their power, and art had reached its highest forms of beauty, and failed to refine and elevate. The lame man at the beautiful gate, a suggestive picture. Rom. i. is a hint of the times. Those who would know more, may study the history of the period.

III. As Moses lifted up the brazen serpent that whoever looked might live, so also was the Son of man lifted up that whosoever, &c. Simple acts. Looking, believing. Looking was all that the dying could do. The cure was immediate. Did not merely begin to get better. None could explain *how* it was. Those who were bitten, and wanted to live, were not so foolish as to wait that they might understand *how* looking operated, before they looked. They looked first, and at once. And if they did not understand *how* it was afterwards, they knew they were cured. Like the blind man, "one thing I know," but "*how* he hath opened mine eyes I know not." How should he? He was blind and could not see. The sincere seeker of salvation will not wait till he understands the philosophy of faith. He will pray for faith, and believe and be saved.

LEARN—I. The world lieth in the wicked one.

II. God has devised a remedy.

III. Men at the last extremity may be saved.

IV. Simple faith in Christ all that is needed.

V. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.

B.C. 1451. Num. xxii. 15—41

- 15 *Balak* (= emptier, spoiler), S. of Zippor; K. of Moab (Num. xxii. xxiv.; Josh. xxiv. 9; Jud. xi. 25; Mic. vi. 5; Rev. ii. 14). . . . *again*. Hence his eagerness. He was superstitious. Believed more in Balaam's power than in his own forces (xxiv. 9; Jud. xi. 25). . . . *more*, in number. . . . *honourable*. The king would do the prophet any homage to procure his aid. . . . *Balaam* (= foreigner), S. of Beor (Bosor, 2 Pet. ii. 15); dwelt at Pethor, in Mesopotamia (v. 5; Deut. xxiii. 4), prob. nr. Bashan (*Jour. Sac. Lit.* Jan. 1852, 384-6); a worldly-minded soothsayer (Josh. xiii. 22). Not unwilling to serve God, but willing at the same time to serve man for a reward. . . . *nothing*, for what was sufficient to counterbalance a king's command? (Matt. vi. 24). . . . *promote*. Balak was in a frenzy of fear (v. 3). . . . *curse*. It was then believed that some had the power to devote, by the aid of their gods, whole armies to destruction. . . . *cannot go*, &c. Because he dared not. He loved Balak for the wage's sake; God loved Israel for His name's sake. . . . *tarry*, &c. He already knew the mind of God (v. 12). He could hardly hope to alter that. Prob. this was a ruse to obtain better and more definite conditions. Balak's promise was vague. *rise up*. A command that suited his pliable conscience. . . . *yet*. *word*, &c., an assurance that must have perplexed him. How to please God and man! *anger*. *went*, that he went so eagerly, and for such a purpose as God saw *was* in his heart. . . . *ass saw*, God opened the ass's eyes, and closed the prophet's (Job xii. 7). . . . *turned aside*, more sensible than his rider. . . . *smote*. In his blindness not even an angel should stop him. . . . *in*. *path*, 25, 26 a second time. . . . *the wall*, to pass the angel. . . . *went further*, third 27 time. . . . *fell down*, with fear. . . . *anger kindled*, should rather have inferred that providence was in the way (Prov. xiv. 16; xxvii. 3, 4). . . . *Lord*. *mouth*. He who had opened her eyes, and closed the prophet's, 29 could surely do this. (*See marg. of Bagster's Comp. Bib.*) . . . *said*, his wrath 30 overcoming his wonder. . . . *wont*. *so*, and therefore is not my conduct to 31 be explained on other grounds than my stupidity? . . . *bowed*. *fell*. His 32 conscience smote him, and he feared the sword. . . . *perverse*. Balaam evidently intended to evade speaking the word of God, and to secure the 33 wards of divination. . . . *unless*, she that you wanted to slay has saved 34 your life. . . . *sinned for*, &c. Sin the cause of much ignorance (Jo. vii. 17; Jas. iv. 17). . . . *if*. *displease*. He feared the sword. Did not think of displeasing God, till it was in sight. The manner of many men. . . . *only*. *word*. This reply discloses Balaam's intention, and explains God's 35 anger with him for going (v. 22) after commanding him to go (v. 20). . . . *so*. *went*, in this way, with such incidents, purposes, instructions. . . . *went*. *meet*. Doing him homage, and believing the kingdom would be 36 delivered. City, prob. Arder. . . . *Moab*, S. part of high table-land on E. of Dead Sea. . . . *Arnon* (= noisy stream), N. of Moab (xxi. 13), the boundary between the Amorites and Moabites. Now *el-Mojeb*. Flows into D. 37 Sea. . . . *did*. *not*. He at first expostulated for delay. He had afterwards (xxiii. 11) to regret that he had come at all. . . . *honour*, which, with 38 wealth, was what Balaam wanted. . . . *power*: but for the angel he would not have admitted this weakness. . . . *word*. *speak*, and Balak must take 39 the consequences, and Balaam forfeit honour and wealth. . . . *Kirjath-hu-zoth* (= city of streets); prob. Rabbath-Moab, now Rabba; ancient capital 40 of Moab. . . . *offered*, to his gods (Chemosh god of Moab). . . . *sent*, Balaam 41 not present at this sacrifice. . . . *high*. *Baal*, prob. Bamoth (xxi. 19, 20).

Purpose—Rebuke—Prophecy.

- I. HIS PURPOSE IN GOING. To secure the rewards of divination. Balaam a great soothsayer dwelling in the neighbourhood of Moab. Even he not unobserved of God. Had probably some knowledge of the history of Israel. Knew not how far his art might prevail against such a people. Professes (v. 8) that he will attend to what the Lord shall say. A matter of surprise, most likely, to him that *the Lord* did speak to him. Is now torn by opposite feelings. A wish to serve the king and enrich himself, on the one hand; and, on the other, a fear of the mysterious Being who has charged him. At length obtains permission to go, but under restraint. Evidently thinks to evade the command.
- II. HIS REBUKE BY THE WAY. The dumb ass forbade the madness of the prophet. *Madness* of the man who thinks to thwart the will of God. Some doubt the possibility of the miracle. With God all things are possible. "Even the heathen did not think such things beyond the power of their deities. Of animate and inanimate things receiving for a short time the gift of speech the heathen mythology is full. Witness the ass of Silenus; the ram of Phryxus; the bull of Europa; the lamb in Egypt, in the reign of Boccaris; the elephant of Porus; and the horses of Achilles and Adrastus, &c., &c." Balaam's fear overcomes his intention. He will speak what is given to him.
- III. HIS PROPHECY AT THE END. (Num. xxiii. xxiv.

"He watch'd till morning's ray
On lake and meadow lay,
And willow-shaded streams, that silent sweep
Around the banner'd lines,
Where by their several signs
The desert-wearied tribes in sight of Canaan sleep.
He watch'd till knowledge came
Upon his soul like flame,
Not of those magic fires at random caught;
But true prophetic light
Flash'd o'er him, high and bright,
Flash'd once, and died away, and left his darken'd thought.
And can he choose but fear,
Who feels his God so near,
That when he fain would curse, his powerless tongue
In blessing only moves?—
Alas! the world he loves
Too close around his heart her tangling veil hath flung.
Sceptre and Star divine,
Who in Thine inmost shrine
Hast made us worshippers, O claim Thine own;
More than Thy seers we know—
O teach our love to grow
Up to thy heavenly light, and reap what thou hast sown."—(Keble.)

LEARN—

- I. Bad men are overruled by God.
II. He is truly blest whom God blesses.
III. Have we seen the Day-star, and come to the brightness of His rising?

B.C. 1451. Num. xxxv. 9—34.

- 10 *When* : a prospective law. Some other laws passed in the wilderness came first into operation after they had entered Canaan. . . . *slayer*. "As the *Goel*, or kinsman, had a right to avenge the death of his relative by slaying the murderer wherever he found him, the appointment of these cities was a humane institution for the protection of the involuntary homicide." . . . *unawares*, Heb. by error (*v.* 22, 23 ; *Ex.* xxi. 12, 13 ; *Deut.* iv. 42 ; xix. 4, 5). . . . *avenger* (*Gen.* iv. 14 ; xxvii. 45 ; *v.* 19, 25—27 ; *Deut.* xix. 6 ; *Jos.* xx. 3 ; *vi.* 9 ; 2 *Sam.* xiv. 7). . . . *until*, and then he shall have a fair trial (*Deut.* xix. 11, 12 ; *Jos.* xx. 4—6). . . . *six*, sufficient in number, convenient in situation, belonging to Levites who might be supposed to have the greater regard for religion and justice, and that the offender might connect his deliverance with religion and God (*com. Heb.* vi. 8). . . . *three cities* (*Deut.* iv. 41—43) : (1.) Bezer (= ore of precious metal), in country of Reuben, S. E. of Heshbon, nr. ruins of Um-er-Rusas. (2.) Ramoth Gilead (= heights of G.), now *es-Salt* (?). In country of Gad. (3.) Golan (= exile), in country of half-tribe of Manasseh. In centre of mod. Gaulanitis ; and prob. now Nimr el-Jaulân. . . . *this side*. These 3 were E. of Jordan. . . . *three cities*. Canaan (*Jos.* xx. 7—9.) (4.) Kedesh (= sanctuary), in territory of Naphtali. Now *Küdes*, 4 m. from L. Merom, in midst of which many ruins. (5.) Shechem (= shoulder-blade). Now Nablous (*less.* 11. *T. L. B.* 473-4 ; *C. D. N. T.* 20 ; *S. S. P.* 233-5) ; in territory of Ephraim. (6.) Kirjath-arba (*less.* 20), in territory of Judah. These three were on W. side of Jordan. . . . *refuge*, place of safety (*Ps.* xlv. 1). . . . *children*. *stranger*. *sojourner*, dictated not by love of nationality, but common justice and humanity. . . . *unawares*. This would have to be afterwards proved. . . . *And*. Now, murder and manslaughter are distinguished. . . . *if*, in the trial following the flight to the city. . . . *he smite*, it be proved that he did so and that he caused death with *iron* (*v.* 16), or *stone* (*v.* 17), or *wood* (*v.* 18). *put . death*, as a murderer. . . . *hatred*. Here cases of meditated murder are
- 20, 21 severally supposed. . . . *laying . wait*, as a secret assassin. . . . *enmity*, envy, and the like. . . . *But*. Here cases of sudden provocation and unpremeditated killing are supposed. . . . *without enmity*, the death be therefore unintended. . . . *without . wait*, unpremeditated. . . . *Or*. Cases of accident are here supposed. . . . *seeing not*, as a builder casting a stone, and unintentionally killing a wayfarer. . . . *harm*. Not even wishing to injure him.
- 24 *congregation*, of judges and witness. . . . *judgments*, acc. to manner and intention as proved in evidence. . . . *deliver*, if they acquit him of murder. *to . city*, to be at large therein. . . . *abide . it*. Even he who has accidentally slain a man, shall be thus marked for his carelessness. . . . *unto . death*, &c. An uncertain time. . . . *come without* : he comes beyond the protection of law. . . . *revenger*, the relative of the slain person. . . . *Because*, as a punishment for carelessness. . . . *slayer . return*, the avenger having no right to molest him. . . . *generations . dwellings*, from age to age, through all the land. . . . *witnesses* (*Deut.* xvii. 6, 7 ; xix. 15 ; *Matt.* xviii. 16 ; *Jo.* viii. 18 ; 2 *Cor.* xiii. 1 ; *Heb.* x. 28 ; *C. D. N. T.* 194). . . . *one . not*, the charge shall be clearly proved. . . . *no satisfaction* : neither the avenger nor the judge shall receive a bribe.

Fields and vineyards.

Suburbs.

City.

1000 cubits.

2000 cubits.

(Explains *vv.* 2—5.)

Texts—Purpose—Situation—Levitical Cities.

TEXTS CONCERNING CITIES OF REFUGE. *Purpose of* (Ex. xxi. 13 ; Num. xxxv. 11 ; Jos. xx. 3). *Names of* (Deut. iv 41—43 ; Jos. xx. 7, 8). *Easy of access* (Deut. xix. 3 ; Isa. lxii. 10) *for all manslayers* (Jos. xx. 4) ; *even strangers, &c.* (Nu. xxxv. 5), *who were put on trial* (v. 12, 24). *Only safe inside* (v. 26, 27). *Must stay till high priest's death* (vv. 25, 28). *No asylum after trial to murderers* (Ex. xxi. 14). *Ill. of Christ* (Ps. xci. 2 ; Isa. xxv. 4) ; *of hope of the gospel* (Heb. vi. 18) ; *of way to Christ* (Isa. xxxv. 8 ; Jo. xiv. 6).

I. PURPOSE. To avenge the death of a person slain, an old custom in the days of Moses. Peculiar to the East. "To the fourth generation among the Bedouins, the lineal desc. of a murdered man is to this day charged with duty of avenging blood" (*S. J. C.* i. 170). "The Goel (redeemer) of the Heb. is the Tair (survivor) of the Arab" (*Michaelis, Laws of Moses*, art. 131). Open to abuse. Revenge fostered. Wrong man or innocent man might be killed. This law of Moses restrained this custom (as his law of slavery also restrained an existing custom, less. 68). Proclaimed sanctity of justice as well as of life. The avenger, heated by passion, should not be *judge* as well as *executioner*. The guilty should have time for thought, repentance, not die in his sins. The avenger saved from after-remorse. The sentence of others should acquit him of blood-thirstiness.

II. SITUATION. Three, each side Jordan. Each therefore commanded a large area. About equal distances from each other. The fugitive not to be hindered by the river ; he would find a city of R. on *his* side Jordan, and not far away. Facility for flight secured by prepared roads (De. xix. 3). The fugitive had only to keep the road. Thus, to Lot, Zoar was a city of refuge. To *us* Christ is a refuge, and *always near*.

"Jesus, refuge of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly,
While the nearer waters roll,
While the tempest still is high.
Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,
Till the storm of life be past :
Safe into the haven guide :
O receive my soul at last.

Other refuge have I none ;
Hangs my helpless soul on thee :
Leave, ah ! leave me not alone,
Still support and comfort me.
All my trust on thee is stay'd ;
All my help from thee I bring ;
Cover my defenceless head
With the shadow of thy wing."
(*C. Wesley.*)

III. LEVITICAL CITIES. Thus teaching justice and mercy, by associating the preservation of law and life with the will of God. The death of the H. Priest the signal of liberty to the captive. We have life and liberty by the death of Christ. Having, then, *one* H. Priest who ever liveth to intercede for us, we have life more abundantly, and rejoice in the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

LEARN—

- I. To respect human life, and all its belongings.
- II. To adore the mercy of God.
- III. To flee for refuge to the Hope set before us.

B.C. 1451. Deut. xxxi. 1—23.

- 1,2 *Moses*, like a faithful servant making provision for the future. . . . *hundred and twenty years* : a long life, of which he had spent 40 years in Egypt (Ac. vii. 20, 23), 40 in Midian (Ac. vii. 29, 30), and 40 in the wilderness. He lived just as long as Noah was preparing the ark. . . . *go out . in*, i. e. undertake the conduct of affairs. . . . *also . said* (Num. xx. 12; Ac. xx. 25; 2 Pet. i. 13, 14). . . . *Lord . God*, thy help in the past. . . . *before thee*, shall be thy help in the future. . . . *nations*, whom you have feared for their number and resources. . . . *possess*, their land. . . . *Joshua*. You once needed a lawgiver, God gave you Moses; you now need a general, and
- 4 he has raised up Joshua. . . . *them*, those nations. . . . *Sihon . Og* (Num. xxi. 21—35; *K. D. B. I. ii.* 205). . . . *before . face*. You shall see their total overthrow. . . . *according*, not to your will, and make unholy alliances
- 6 (Ex. xxiii. 32, 33; Num. xxiii. 52—56). . . . *Be strong*, in the Lord, not your own strength. . . . *courage*. God fighteth for you. . . . *He . go*, not simply Joshua. . . . *fail*, forget. . . . *forsake*, leave you to yourselves. . . .
- 7 *Moses*, having thus exhorted and prepared the people. . . . *sight . Israel*, acc. to command of God (Num. xxvii. 18—23). That the public charge might be more binding than a private one, and that the people might witness his appointment. . . . *Lord sworn*. Let his promise give thee confidence. . . . *thou . cause*, as God's servant in my place. . . . *with thee*, you
- 9 are not alone. . . . *this law*. The moral and ceremonial law. . . . *priests*, who would attend to it as a law from God. . . . *year . release* (xv. 1, &c.).
- 11,12 *place . choose* (xii. 5). Jerusalem not known to Moses. . . . *women*. Another hint, among many, of Divine recognition of right position of woman, and her equality with man. . . . *children* : such being their privilege
- 13 their duty is plain, and related, *v.* 13. . . . *that . children* (vi. 7; xi. 2; Ps. lxxviii. 4; Prov. xxii. 6; Eph. vi. 4). . . . *not . known*, by experience, i. e. coming generations. . . . *and . Lord*, after these matters were done.
- 14 *days . die* : true of all men. . . . *I . charge*. What this charge was does not appear; unless it was that in *v.* 23, which though given by Moses was
- 16 delivered in the Divine presence, and so confirmed. . . . *sleep . fathers* (Gen. xxv. 8; 2 Sam. vii. 12; Is. lvii. 2; Ac. xiii. 36). . . . *people will* : a sad prophecy of the future conduct of a people for whom so much had
- 17 been done. . . . *Then*. Divine anger and justice as certain as human transgression. . . . *befall*, Heb. find them. "Be sure your sin will *find* you
- 18,19 out." . . . *hide . face*, withdraw approbation and protection. . . . *this song* (xxxii. 1—43). . . . *witness*, a constant remembrance of His mercy
- 20 and their sin. . . . *waxen fat* (Neh. ix. 25, 26), increased in wealth, become
- 21 proud and self-sufficient. . . . *song . witness*. Being sung by the children it would bring its allusions vividly before their minds, and stir their consciences. . . . *even now* : and yet, knowing how they would treat him, how
- 22 merciful he still is to them. . . . *Moses therefore*, at God's command, and
- 23 for this purpose. . . . *Joshua . charge*, a solemn injunction. Coming with all the weight of an old man's last words, and with Divine authority. . . . *and said*, repeating what he had said before in the sight of Israel, but now in the presence of God. Thus all Israel and God were witnesses to this solemn charge. Joshua seems never to have forgotten it. It influenced him all through his life. He was henceforth strong in the Lord; of good courage in the face of all dangers; and he did bring the people into the promised land. Thus he discharged his duty, and God fulfilled his word.
- K. D. B. I. ii.* 236. *K. D. iii.* 455. *S. J. C. i.* 139, 225, 227, 228, 242, 271.

The Situation—the Work to be Done—the Man for the Work.

- I. THE SITUATION. Israel, at the end of 40 years' wandering, at last on the confines of Palestine. They had been led all this way by one man. A mob of fugitive slaves had been organized into a nation. Civil and ecclesiastical laws had been given. A system had been formed, out of which was to be developed the greatness of the people in the future. Their confidence in Moses had increased as by many proofs they had been taught that God was with him. They naturally looked up to him. At this crisis Moses died. Now, who should help them to the end? Hitherto the work had been one of consolidation; in the future it would be defence and conquest. God was sufficient for them.
- II. THE WORK TO BE DONE. To conquer their future country. At this time inhabited by many of the most warlike tribes in the world. Tribes dwelling in fenced cities, who knew the country, who were used to war, who had warlike implements (chariots, &c.), who were fighting for their hearths and homes. The man for the *former*, not the man for *this* work, judging of human fitness from a human standpoint. By constant miracles, any instruments might be employed. But the people must be trained to be self-reliant, and not to constantly look out for wonders. Miracles at beginning and all through the life of Moses. Not ceased yet, but became fewer in number. Life in the wilderness sustained by a daily miracle. Now to result from personal endeavour.
- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>“ The voice that from the glory came
 To tell how Moses died unseen,
 And waken Joshua's spear of flame
 To victory on the mountains green:
 Its trumpet tones are sounding still;
 When kings or parents pass away,
 They greet us with a cheering thrill
 Of power and comfort in decay.</p> | <p>Behind the soft bright summer cloud
 That makes such haste to melt and die,
 Our wistful gaze is oft allow'd
 A glimpse of the unchanging sky.
 Let storm and darkness do their worst;
 For the lost dream the heart may ache,
 The heart may ache, but may not burst:
 Heaven will not leave thee nor forsake.”
 (Keble.)</p> |
|---|---|
- III. THE MAN FOR THE WORK. Joshua. Had been long in training. Already a leader in battle. Had defeated the Amalekites. The people's confidence secured. Man of Divine choice. No mistake such as might result from human election. Had been trained under the eye of Moses. Was his friend and companion. His heart thoroughly bound up with the interests of the people. He was brave, true, believing. Never daunted by difficulties. One of the most illustrious of Old Testament worthies.

LEARN—

- I. Gratefully to review the past of our life.
- II. Not to be cast down by present perplexities.
- III. Trust in God for the future. “Nothing shall harm,” &c.
- IV. He who knows what things we have need of, can provide for every emergency.

B.C. 1451. Deut. xxxiv. 1—12.

- 1 *plains . Moab*. M. comprised 3 div. : (a.) 'country' or 'field' of M. (Ruth i. 1, 2, 6), S. of the Arnon. (b.) 'land' of M. (Deut. i. 5), open country, opp. Jericho. (c.) the 'plains' of M. (Num. xxii. 1), in the Jordan, sunk valley. *mt Nebo* (= interpreter), opposite Jericho. In all probability a spur or summit of the ridge of Pisgah, and part of the Abarim chain (xxxii. 49; Num. xxi. 20). Lofty; commanded extensive views over Palestine. . . . *Pisgah*. Abarim, Nebo, Pisgah, are so connected, as to cause perplexity (com. xxxii. 49 with xxxiv. 1). We may conclude : (a.) that *Abarim* was the name of a range or group of mts; (b.) that *Nebo* was one of the peaks in that range; (c.) and that *Pisgah* was = *Abarim*, or an isolated peak. Prob. Pisgah, like Abarim, was a name of the range. . . . *shewed*. For description of this wonderful view see *S. J. C.* i. 196-8. His vision swept the greater part of Palestine both W. and E. of Jordan. He saw the cities, hills, plains, and rivers of the land of promise. Standing with his face to the W., . . . *Gilead* was on the right. . . . *Dan*, far away in front (past
- 2 Jericho and Jerusalem), on the borders of the M. Sea. . . . *Naphtali*, much farther to the right than Gilead. . . . *Ephraim*. *Manasseh*, opp. but to the
- 3 right of Dan. . . . *Judah*, across the D. Sea to the left. . . . *valley . Jericho*, straight before him, in the tribe of Benjamin. . . . *palm trees* (*C. D. N. T.*
- 4 112, 152). . . . *Zoar*. Far to the left across the D. Sea. . . . *This . land*, so fair, extensive, fruitful. . . . *I swear* (Gen. xii. 7; xiii. 15; xv. 18, 21; xxvi. 6; xxviii. 13; Ps. cv. 9—11). I have never forgotten my word. The people have prevented its earlier fulfilment. . . . *to see it*. That you may know that you have not laboured in vain, but have conducted the people to its borders. . . . *not go over*. In mercy, because of the wars that will follow; in judgment, because of thy sins (Deut. iii. 26, 27; Num. xx. 12).
- 5 *servant . Lord*. No higher title can be desired. Still the s. of God, in death, as in life. . . . *died*. Moses changed his place, but not his company.
- 6 Death to him the day-break of eternal brightness. . . . *land . Moab*. It matters more *how* than *where* one dies. . . . *buried*, see Jude 9; whence : (a.) an angel superintended the burial of Moses. (b.) The father of lies, the soul of Moses being beyond his reach, desired to damage the living by means of the body of Moses. Could he have disposed of that body, by bringing about M. death in some other place, or by guiding Israel to the place of sepulchre, there would have been a shrine more sacred, for many ages, than all others. Prob. M. would have been deified. And either pilgrimages had been made to Nebo, or the body had been carried over Jordan, and become an object of adoration in the Holy Land. . . . *Beth-peor* (= house of P.); temple of P. dedicated to worship of Baal-peor (Deut. iii. 29; iv. 46; Jos. xiii. 20). . . . *no man knoweth*. Satan's design frustrated. Men
- 7 saved from idolatry in this case. . . . *not dim*. Hence he could see the "sweet fields beyond the swelling flood." . . . *natural force*, manly vigour. Did not die of mere decay, but by special will of God. Since God had declared that he should not go over, it was a mercy to Israel that he should die now and thus; otherwise they had still longer tarried in the wilderness
- 8 till the outer man of M. perished by natural decay. . . . *wept*. He was valued now that he was gone. The worth of blessings often estimated
- 9 when too late. . . . *Moses'* warlike successor. . . . *of wisdom*, which God
- 10 gave him for his special work. . . . *arose not*, till Jesus came (see and com. xviii. 15; Ac. iii. 22—26; vii. 37; Matt. xvii. 3—5; Heb. iii. 5, 6). . . .
- 11 *signs*, to instruct. . . . *wonders*, to excite attention.

 Death—Burial—and Mourning for Moses.

I. THE DEATH OF MOSES. (1.) *Close of a long and chequered life.* Three terms of 40 years each. The central period peaceful, domestic ; separating two, each of which full of events. (2.) *Close of a useful life.* Law-giver, leader, prophet of Israel. (3.) *Close of life of trial.* Tried by the people, by Egypt's king, by Zipporah. (4.) *Close of life in midst of strength.* Eye undimmed. Strength of manhood firm. (5.) *Close of life in presence of unfinished work, and in full view of promised-land.* A common case. Men labour, but do not see the end of their labours. One sows, another reaps. We enter into other men's labours. We inherit their successes, and in our turn toil and sow for the future. Thus Cowley writes, whose words, Macaulay (*Essay on Bacon*) extends to the great English philosopher, who

“ Did on the very border stand
Of the blessed promised land ;
And from the mountain's top of his exalted wit
Saw it himself, and show'd us it ;
But life did never to one man allow
Time to discover worlds and conquer too.”

II. THE BURIAL OF MOSES. Mysterious. God took it into his hands. He cared for the dying, and since he could not suffer him to enter the land of promise, he granted him the next best thing to it :— death in full view of it, with the peace of it in his own heart ; and in the presence and with support of God. Precious in sight of Lord is the death of his saints. He cared for the living. Would not have them injured by any idolatry that the knowledge of Moses' sepulchre might have occasioned. (See Jude 9.) Satan had often tried to lead the people astray during the life of Moses. But Moses was the great hindrance to his success. Now there would seem to be a chance of success. He would begin at the very grave of Moses. Could not use the *body*, any more than he could have the *soul* of Moses. Now is baffled in whatever designs he might have, *with or by means of* the body of Moses. No man knoweth, &c., and Satan not able to communicate a knowledge of the spot.

III. THE MOURNING FOR MOSES. The people wept. They had often scorned and rebelled. Now they realize their great loss. Death removes our great men, and teachers, and then, see Ezek. xxxiii. 33. Better to use Divine blessings wisely, than have to mourn their removal, and have mixed with our grief at the loss, sorrows also at our own misconduct. They were the occasion of that sin on account of which Moses was hindered of entering the promised land. They mourned over their injustice and sin when it was too late. It was universal mourning for a public loss. Great men are public property. All should honour them while they live, that their sorrow may be pure when they die.

LEARN—I. Let us work while it is called to-day.

II. God will take care of us after death, and raise us up at the last day.

III. Jesus is *our* prophet, how do we regard him ?

B.C. 1451. Josh. iii. 1—17.

- 1 *early . morning*. Prompt execution. A long day's important work needs an early beginning. The great men of old, who lived to serve God, were early risers (Gen. xix. 27; xxi. 14; xxii. 3; xxviii. ; Ex. viii. 20; ix. 13; xxiv. 4; xxxiv. 4; Josh. vii. 16; viii. 10; 1 Sam. xv. 12; xvii. 20; Job i. 5; Mar. xvi. 2; Ac. v. 21, &c.) Acc. to Ussher, Wednesday, Ap. 28, A.M. 2553. . . . *Shittim* (= acacias), W. of Jordan, and dis. ab. 7 or 8 m. (*Bonar, Land of Promise*, 286). . . . *Jordan* (= flowing down), the R. of Palestine. Runs direct from N. to S. Length 160 m. Called by Arabs *el-Sharia*. Rises in Anti-Libanus 12 m. N. of Cæsarea-Philippi (*Banias*). 27 m. from fountain, forms waters of Merom. 28 m. further it passes through S. of Galilee, and thence it flows S. into D. Sea. . . . *lodged*, encamped.
- 2 *three days* (i. 10, 11). . . . *officers*, leaders. . . . *went through*, as Joshua's
- 3 messengers. . . . *ark . God*. God, rather than J., was the "captain of Israel's host." . . . *then*, not before; till then be patient. . . . *after*, with confidence. Safety where God leads the way. . . . *space*, that it may be the better seen, and no irreverent thronging. . . . *two thousand cubits* = ab. 1000 yds = rather more than half a mile. . . . *for . passed*. And hence must
- 5 be taught "the right way." . . . *Sanctify*. By prayer and ceremonial purifications, seek to be prepared for the manifestation of Divine mercy and power in your behalf. . . . *wonders*, of which the passage of the J. would
- 6 be the first. . . . *priests*, whose duty this was. Not even J. had the honour of leading the way. . . . *before*, in front and in sight of. . . . *begin* : for what J. had done before was as nothing while Moses yet lived. . . . *magnify*, make thee great in the esteem and veneration of the people. . . . *know*, of a certainty. . . . *was* . *Moses*, a thing they could not really doubt.
- 8 *with thee*, believing which, they would have the greater confidence. . . . *stand* . *Jordan*, without fear of the water. Safety where the ark is (Lam.
- 9 iii. 26). . . . *words . God*. Not *my* words merely. A *wonder* to excite,
- 10 *words* to instruct. . . . *Hereby*, by this sign. . . . *know* : they might otherwise have doubted. . . . *living God*, who has the lives of all in his hand; of his friends to preserve, and of enemies to destroy them. . . . *among you*, and therefore *with you*, and *against* your foes. . . . *without fail*, without
- 11 coming short of his word. . . . *Canaanites* (see opp. page). . . . *Behold*. This is the sign. . . . *passeth over*. Showing God's purpose, making a path through the river, which here was 20 yds across, deeper than a man's height, and so rapid that none could swim against it. The time of this passage was when the snows of Lebanon and Hermon melted, the current
- 12 at its greatest depth and strength. . . . *tribe . man*, showing that for all tribes this wonder was wrought. These were to be close at hand, to see the miracle, and tell the rest, and also, see iv. 2—9 (*com.* with the 12 spies).
- 13 *waters*, i. e. S. of the ark. . . . *cut off*, divided from, and still flowing, shall leave the bed of the river dry. . . . *heap*, on the N. of the ark. Otherwise they would spread out and form a lake (see Isa. lix. 19; *com.* Ex. xiv. 22).
- 14 A great miracle. The river obeyed its maker. . . . *came . pass*, followed.
- 15 *Jordan overfloweth*. God chose this time to make his power more manifest, and so encourage the people at the very commencement. . . . *above*, from the N. . . . *rose*, not being able to pass the ark. . . . *of Adam* = red earth, 30 m. from the place of crossing. Even so far was the accumulation of waters perceptible! . . . *Zaretan* (= cooling?), Zereda. Zeredathah (1 Ki. xi. 26; 2 Ch. iv. 17), Zererath (Jud. vii. 22), Zartaneh (1 Ki. iv. 12), or Zarthan (vii. 46), near Succoth, at the mouth of the river Jabbok.

Canaanitish Tribes—the Time and Manner of the Passage.

NOTES ON THE 7 CANAANITISH TRIBES. (1.) *Canaanites* (=lowlanders). In largest sense, comprised all the tribes desc. from Canaan, the son of Ham (Gen. x. 15—18). Strictly the lowlanders, dwelling by sea, and near Jordan (Nu. xiii. 29); warlike (Jud. i. 27—33); used chariots (iv. 2, 3); fenced cities (Nu. xiii. 28; De. vi. 10); commercial people (Job xli. 6; Prov. xxxi. 24). (2.) *Hittites* desc. from Heth, son of Canaan (Gen. x. 15; 1 Ch. i. 13). Time of Abraham in S. of land, as Hebron (Gen. xxiii. 3—18). (3.) *Hivites* (=villagers, or, acc. to some, serpents), desc. from Ham (Gen. x. 17; 1 Ch. i. 15). Dwelt chiefly near Jerusalem, and extended towards the N.; inhabiting Gibeon, &c. (Jos. ix. 7, 17). Crafty (*ill.* serpent), not very powerful. Blended with other tribes. Called sometimes Amorites (Gen. xlviii. 22; 2 Sa. xxi. 2). (4.) *Perizzites* (=villagers), with *Canaanites*, who seem to have lived in fenced towns; they seem sometimes to include all the inhabitants of the land (Gen. xiii. 7; xxxiv. 30; Jud. i. 4, 5. *Kalisch*). (5.) *Girgashites* (=dwelling in clayey or loamy soil). Locality not defined. Supposed in central part of W. Palestine. (6.) *Amorites* (=mountaineers). Prob. most numerous and powerful tribe. Sometimes seem to include all the tribes (Gen. xv. 16; xlviii. 22; De. i. 20; Amos ii. 9, 10). (7.) *Jebusites* (=trodden down). Prob. small tribe, living in circumscribed territory (Gen. xv. 21; Ex. iii. 8, 17), near Jerusalem (Nu. xiii. 29). Important to note that these tribes were to be expelled not merely to fulfil a promise (Gen. xiii. 14, 15, 17); but also as an act of retributive justice (Gen. xv. 13—16). Those who see only harshness in their sudden expulsion should also consider the mercy that spared them so long. "It is of the Lord's mercy that *we* are not consumed." Besides being idolatrous, corrupt, and hopelessly vile; they had themselves dispossessed the Rephaim, Emim, Anakim, &c. They held the land by *might*, not by *right*. They were therefore expelled and finally destroyed, for two reasons:—Because (1.) they had no right to the country. (2.) They were corrupt.

- I. THE TIME. When the snows melting on Hermon, &c., caused the river to be most wide and rapid. From S. of Galilee to D. Sea only 60 miles. D. Sea 1000 feet below level of S. of Galilee. Hence rapidity of current, and now swollen by melted snows. Jordan full of rapids. Fall of river 17 feet in a mile. (Only one other river, Sacramento in California, with greater fall.) Took Lieut. Lynch a week to get down the J. in boats specially adapted by modern science. Cannot be forded or crossed by swimming or on rafts. Current would sweep them towards the D. Sea. The people of Jericho and their allies did not dispute the passage. Prob. thought it would not be attempted. Regarded Jordan as a great natural defence of their town.
- II. THE MANNER. Miraculous. No boats, rafts, or bridge. Only the ark visible. But there was the great God who holds the water of the sea in the hollow of his hand. All the people looking on. Twelve selected witnesses. The ark enters the waters. Israel crosses safely.

B.C. 1451. Josh. vi. 1—21.

- 1 *straitly shut up* = closely besieged (Heb. did shut up, and was shut up).
 2 *none . out . in.* It was invested on all sides. . . . *to Joshua*, who was now fully in the place of Moses. . . . *see* = know = be assured of. . . . *I have given.* They had yet to capture it. But it was as good as done when the Lord resolved it. . . . *Jericho* (= a fragrant place. Here grew the sweet smelling Henna (camphire, Cant. i. 14) and balm of Gilead (Gen. xliii. 11; Jer. viii. 22; xlv. 11); ab. 5 m. from the Jordan. Prob. founded soon after the destruction of the cities of the plain; and prob. by some who lived near that disaster. Surrounded by palms (Deut. xxxiv. 3); *con.* Josh. vi. 26 with 1 Ki. xvi. 34). . . . *king thereof* (Deut. vii. 24; Jud. xi. 24). . . . *ye . compass, march round.* Never was a city so strangely taken. Its capture, in such a way, fitted to fill the foe with consternation, and Israel with courage. . . . *once, and then rest. . . . six days.* Each day
 4 marching round and resting. . . . *And.* This shall be the manner of the march. . . . *seven.* "The number 7 was among the Israelites the symbolic seal of the covenant between God and their nation" (*K. D.*; *K. D. B. I.* ii. 267; *Hengstenberg*; *P. C.* i. 139). . . . *trumpets of rams' horns*, Heb. Jubilee trumpets, prob. made of horn or silver. Instead of the t. of war, they sounded the t. of joy. . . . *seven times*, by which time all would be wearied by so long a march; and yet "the lame" shall "take the prey."
 5 *shall fall.* This would be a great trial of faith. . . . *straight . him.* Hence
 6 the city would be entered from all sides at once. . . . *Joshua*, having received the command, immediately issued instructions to the priests. . . .
 7 *unto . people*, instructing them as well as the priests. . . . *armed* (i. 14;
 8 where the Heb. is "marshalled by five"), as a vanguard. . . . *had spoken*,
 9 full directions being given, the work began. . . . *rereward, rearguard*, Heb. gathering host. . . . *until . day.* Until the seventh day there was no noise, save the tramp of the march and the blast of trumpets. Imagine the astonishment and prob. the merriment also of the besieged, as they saw the sight
 11,12 from their walls. . . . *So*, all things being ready, and understood. . . . *early . morning* (less. 81). Those who love the service of God will try to make
 13 the day long, for life is short, and days are few. . . . *continually*, marching
 14 without stopping till the circuit was complete. . . . *for six days.* The besieged wondering what it might mean, and how long it might last. . . .
 15 *early . dawning*, anxious to have time enough for their great work. . . . *seven times.* Perseverance and continuance in faith and the actions thereof at least obtaineth the victory; the nearer the end the combat is, the
 16 more ought the faithful man to bestir himself therein (*Trapp*). . . . *Shout*:
 17 and what a shout from so many thousand voices. . . . *accursed*, devoted, doomed (Ezra ix. 11). . . . *Rahab . harlot*, or tavern-keeper; so understood by Targumist and by St Chrysostom (ii. 1; *Marg. Bagster's Comp. Bib.*). Among the ancients women usually kept the houses of entertainment. . . .
 18 *from . thing.* Israel not to be enriched by wages of sin. The firstfruits of
 19 conquest an exception to custom (viii. 27, &c.). . . . *consecrated*, Heb.
 20 holiness. . . . *fell . flat*, Heb. fell down under it. . . . *took . city.* It seems (xxiv. 11) to have been reinforced from all the country. Its fall would
 21 paralyse the rest, and facilitate future victories. . . . *utterly destroyed.* Canaanites were now ripe for destruction (see Gen. xv. 16). In all public calamities infants are involved; and tens of thousands of infants die in great agony every year.

K. D. B. I. ii. 239, 263, 277. D. B. N. S. ii. 206. R. B. R. ii. 273—304.

Rahab—Strangeness of the Siege—Completeness of the Overthrow.

NOTE ON RAHAB. Was she a *harlot* or a *hostess*? (1.) The word *Zonah* gen. trans. harlot, ought, say very many of the learned, *here* to be trans. *hostess*; from Zoon = to provide food. The Targumist renders it *ittetha pundekeetha* = a woman, a tavern-keeper. St Chrysostom calls her a *πανδοκυρία* = a hostess. (2.) Among the ancients, houses of entertainment were not unusually kept by women. (3.) It is hard to believe that two *picked* men, selected for a special purpose by Joshua, who had once suffered from evil spies, would have gone direct to the house of a *harlot*, under any pretence whatever. (4.) It is doubted if there were, at that early time, any khans, &c. But see Gen. xlii. 27; xliii. 21; Ex. iv. 24. (5.) It is said that they would have avoided Inns as most likely to be searched, if the presence of spies in the city were suspected. Yet the house of Rahab was searched (Josh. ii. 2, 3). (6.) If a *hostess*, she may have heard from travellers of the great encampment of Israelites at Shittim, &c. (Josh. ii. 9—11); and in their history, as she heard it afterwards corroborated by the two spies, would be an incentive to her faith and its stipulations (ii. 12, 13). (7, but ?) The word (*πορνῇ*) used by the apostles (Heb. xi. 31; Jas. ii. 25) is derived from a verb (*περνᾶω*) = to sell; and, though usually, may not necessarily allude to the wages of sin. (8.) One can hardly believe that Salmon, a prince of Judah (S. of that Naashon so honourably mentioned, Num. vii. 12), and father of Boaz (Ruth iv. 20, 21; 1 Ch. ii. 11; Lu. iii. 32; Matt. i. 5), would marry a harlot, though she had become a proselyte. It must, in fairness, be added that, after all that may be said, R. is believed to have been a *harlot* by most writers of eminence on the subject.*

- I. STRANGENESS OF THE SIEGE. (1.) Absence of siege machines. No catapults, scaling ladders, &c. (2.) Instruments employed. Trumpets of jubilee. *Faith*. The trumpets of J. blown as though the city were already taken. Obedience in marching, the fruit of faith. What connection, other than the declared will of God, was there between this seven days' marching, and the trumpet-blowing, and the final shout, and the taking of the city? (3.) Astonishment and prob. merriment (*Bp. Hall*) of the besieged as they witnessed this strange scene from their walls. Never was town before or since taken in so strange a fashion.
- II. COMPLETENESS OF THE OVERTHROW. The calmness of the besiegers. They rest from day to day at the end of each of six days. On the seventh, *early*, make their last march. Trumpets and the shout. Walls fall flat. Consternation within and joy without. The city taken. Thus by the foolishness of preaching are the high places of sin to be attacked, stormed, taken. Gospel trumpet, *the* trumpet, the trumpet of the world's jubilee or joy, good news, &c. Cities, &c., taken by gospel grace; not destroyed, but saved. Our Joshua, Jesus, delivers from the power of the sword of justice.

* Such as Clement of R. (Ep. ad Cor.); Calvin; K. D. on Josh. ii. 1; R. Bernard on Ruth iv. conclu.; Alford on Matt. i. 5 and Heb. xi. 31; Lange; Olshausen on Matt. i. 5; Gouge on Heb. xi. 31 Manton on Jas. ii. 25; S. J. C. i. 236, note; &c.

B.C. 1451. Jos. x. 1—15.

- 1 *Adoni-zedec* (= lord of justice), K. of Amorites. . . . *Ai* (= heap of ruins), called Hai (Gen. xii. 8; xiii. 3). Destroyed (vii. 2—5; viii. 1—29); rebuilt and prob. called Aiath (Is. x. 28). Men of A. returned from Babylon (Ez. ii. 28; Neh. vii. 32). Prob. the Aija peopled by the Benjamites (Neh. xi. 31). E. of Bethel; and now perhaps *Tell el-Haiyeh*. and how (ix. 15). . . . *Gibeon* (= hill city), city of Hivites (ix. 3—27). In lot of Benjamin (xviii. 25); afterwards allotted to the priests (xxi. 17). Now called *el-Jib*, a hill-village ab. 6 m. N. of Jerusalem (*T. L. B.* 669, 670). . . . *peace*, which G. obtained by craft (ix. 4—15): but they were
- 2 reduced to servitude. . . . *they*, of Jerusalem. . . . *feared*: prob. they expected help from G. . . . *great*, important, rather than large. . . . *royal cities*, Heb. city of the kingdom. Cap. of a district. Four others—at least—dependant on it (ix. 3—27). . . . *greater*. *Ai*, more influential; and
- 3 prob. stronger. . . . *Wherefore*, as no help could be got from G. . . . *Hebron* (less. 12). . . . *Jarmuth*, city of Amorites, sit. in plain of Judah (xv. 35; Neh. xi. 29); now *Yarmūk*, ab. 8 m. from Beil Jibrim. . . . *Lachish* (= impregnable), in plain of Judah. Sit. not known. Prob. not the village of *Um Lakis*. . . . *Eglon*, a city of the Amorites. Now *'Ajlau*.
- 4 10 m. N. of Gaza. . . . *smite Gibeon*. To destroy the alliance. Divert the war from Jerusalem. Prevent other cities from making such alliances.
- 5,6 *together*, united their forces. . . . *Slack*. *hand*. Do not loosen the bonds that unite us. . . . *servants*, not equals (ix. 21—23). Thus humble, because
- 7 of their old imposition. . . . *Gilgal* (= rolling away), place of first encampment in Palestine. Reproach of Egypt, there rolled away (iv. 19, 20; v. 1—11; ix. 6; xiv. 6). Near Jericho, and ab. 6 m. from Jordan
- 8 (*T. L. B.* 524). . . . *man*. *stand*, however great his prowess, numerous
- 9 his army, or mighty his alliances. . . . *suddenly*, while they were intent on the siege. . . . *all night*, by a forced march of some 26 m. A three days'
- 10 journey for caravans (ix. 17). . . . *discomfited*, utterly routed, and put them to shame. . . . *along*. *way*, ab. 10 m. . . . *goeth up*, a rugged ascent. *Beth-horon* (= house of the hollow or of caves). This was the *upper* Beth-h. (see v. 11). . . . *Aze'kah* (= broken up), prob. rough hilly country. Nr. to, but prob. in the neighbourhood of, the upper *Beth-h.* . . . *Mak'kedah* (= place of shepherds), prob. still beyond *Azekah* (*S. B. D.* ii. 20, 21).
- 11 *going down*, descent, in one place by means of steps cut in the rock (*R. B. R.* iii. 59). . . . *Beth-horon*. This was the *lower* Beth-h., 3 m. from the *upper*. This great battle, rout, and slaughter, therefore, spread over some 7 or 8 m. of country. *Azekah* and *Makkedah* seem to have been places where stands were made against the pursuers. . . . *great stones*, i. e. hailstones. The oriental storm is terrific; hailstones as large as walnuts, or double-fist; falling violently, they are often fatal to human life (*P. C.*).
- 12 *spake*. *Lord*. What he said about the sun and moon seems therefore to have been the substance of the prayer he made. . . . *Sun*. *Moon*. "Many vain inquiries have been made concerning the way in which this miracle was wrought, many difficulties and objections have been urged against understanding it *literally*. But the fact is authenticated by the divine testimony; and the manner in which it was accomplished lies entirely out of our province, because beyond our comprehension" (*Marg. Bag. Comp. Bib.*). . . . *Gibeon* (= a hill). At the rear of the Israelites, it would soon
- 13 have intercepted the light. . . . *Ajalon* (= stags). . . . *still*. Seemed to do so, the light being supernaturally prolonged.

Reasons of the Confederacy—Wonders of the Battle—Results of Victory.

NOTES ON VV. 12—15. "The inspired author here breaks off the thread of his history of this miraculous victory, to introduce a quotation from an ancient poem. The passage, which is parenthetical, contains a *poetical* description of the victory thus gained by Divine aid, and is an ex. from the Book of Jasher = the upright—an anthology or collection of national songs, in honour of renowned and pious heroes. Poetic language is not to be literally interpreted. When therefore the S. and M. are addressed as intelligent beings, the explanation is that the light of both was supernaturally prolonged by the same laws of refraction and reflection that ordinarily cause the S. to appear above the horizon when he is really below it." (*Keil, Bush, P. C.*) *Poetically*, J. is said to address the S. and M.; *literally*, he (v. 12) spake to the Lord.

NOTE ON THE B. OF BETH-HORON. "It is one of the few military engagements which belong equally to ecclesiastical and civil history,—which have decided equally the fortunes of the world and of the Church. The roll will be complete if to this we add two or three more which we shall encounter in the Jewish history; and, in later times, the battle of the Milvian Bridge, which involved the fall of Paganism (A.D. 312); the battle of Poitiers which sealed the fall of Arianism (507); the battle of Bedr, which secured the rise of Mahometanism in Asia (623); the battle of Tours, which checked the spread of Mahometanism in Western Europe (732); the battle of Lepanto, which checked it in Eastern Europe (1571); the battle of Lutzen, which determined the balance of power between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism in Europe (1632)." (*S. J. C. i. 238.*)

I. REASONS OF THE CONFEDERACY. To punish Gibeon, &c., for making peace with Joshua. *III.* The world angry when any belonging to it go over to the Lord. New converts often the subjects of persecution. One great hindrance to the spread of truth in Mahometan and other lands is the trial to which converts are exposed. The Jews resolved to cast out of the synagogue any who confessed Christ (Jo. vii. 13; ix. 22; xii. 42).

II. WONDERS OF THE BATTLE. (1.) Supernatural lengthening of daylight. (2.) Sudden storm. Such a storm at Constantinople in 1831 (*K. D. B. I. ii. 291*). Hailstones of a pound weight; houses unroofed; animals and trees destroyed.

III. RESULTS OF VICTORY. (1.) Encouragement to any who might sue for peace. They would be protected. (2.) The enemy, demoralized, filled with fear at perceiving how certain would be their conquest. (3.) Israelites encouraged to go on from conquering to conquer. (4.) A firm hold obtained of the very heart of the country. From this time the land may be regarded as subdued. Other fighting but to secure the results of this victory.

LEARN—

I. Sun, moon, elements, &c., are God's creatures, and fulfil his word.

II. No wicked confederacy can withstand Divine power.

III. God will help us to obtain the victory over our spiritual foes.

B.C. 1445. Jos. xi. 1—15.

- 1 *Jabin* (= *whom he*, i. e. God, *observes*). His eyes are on the evil and the good. . . . *Hazor* (= enclosure, castle). Site uncertain. Prob. the modern *Hazere* (*T. L. B.* 285, 286). . . . *Jobab* (= desert). . . . *Madon* (= contention). Site unknown. . . . *Shimron*, now Semûnieh, ab. 4 m.
 - 2 S. W. of Nazareth. . . . *Achshaph*. Prob. the modern Kesâf. . . . *north of . mountains*. As those named dwelt in the extreme N., these must refer to mt Lebanon. . . . *Chinneroth* (= Gennesaret = Galilee). . . . *valley*, lowland, including pl. of Sharon. . . . *Dor*. On the Mediterranean Sea,
 - 3 between Cæsarea and Ptolemais, now Tantûra (*T. L. B.* 500). . . . *east and west*, from Jordan to the M. S. . . . *and*, &c. By referring to the map it will be seen that this was a powerful confederacy of the N. tribes. . . .
 - 4 *went out*, in battle array (1 Ki. xx. 11). . . . *as sand*, unnumbered, or innumerable (Gen. xxii. 17; Ju. vii. 12). . . . *horses . chariots*, deemed
 - 5 almost invincible at that time (Is. xxx. 1; Ps. xx. 7). . . . *all . kings*, chieftains. . . . *pitched*, encamped. . . . *Merom*, a small lake N. of S. of Galilee, $4\frac{1}{2}$ m. long, and at the widest $3\frac{1}{2}$ m. Now called the *Hûleh* (*T. L. B.* 259, 260). . . . *Lord . Joshua*, who in the presence of such an alliance might need special encouragement. . . . *to-morrow*. After the fight at Beth-horon, Joshua must have promptly pushed northwards to break up the enemy there. They formed a speedy union before he got there. . . . *hough* (A.S. *hoĥ*). To cut the hamstrings of cattle, so as to disable them. The hock is the joint between the knee and fetlock. It was proved at Waterloo that infantry are more than a match for cavalry,
 - 7 a thing not believed anciently. . . . *came*, did not wait to be attacked. . . . *suddenly*, forced march (x. 9; less. 83). Joshua's decision of character. *fell upon*, charged them. Joshua did not lose the moral advantage that
 - 8 making the attack would give him. . . . *Zidon* (= a fishery), Zidon-Rabbah, now Sidon (*T. L. B.* 88). Not content with a victory, he would prevent them rallying in the future. . . . *Misrephoth-maim* (= burnings of waters), prob. salt pits. Place nr. Zidon. . . . *Mizpeh*, per. Coele-Syria.
 - 9 *horses . chariots*. Henceforth Israel would not fear these warlike animals
 - 10 and terrible instruments. . . . *turned back*, from this pursuit. . . . *and*, returning. . . . *Hazor*, the head-quarters of resistance. . . . *head*, the rest
 - 11 being subordinate, if not tributary. . . . *burnt*. It was too far N., too far from the seat of government to be garrisoned. But too near to be suffered to remain at a fortified hold in the midst of enemies. A good general
 - 12 makes good his conquests. . . . *Moses . commanded* (Num. xxxiii. 52, 53). Joshua not only entered on the *office*, but the *labours* of Moses. He was
 - 13 not of those who would make office a *sinecure*. . . . *still . strength*, lit. on their heaps. Mountain fortresses, whose destruction would occupy much valuable time. In destroying Hazor he had severed their bond of union,
 - 14 and demoralized their political power. . . . *spoil*, their valuables. Engines of war. He disarmed them. . . . *prey . themselves*. As rewards of courage. As incentives to perseverance in the work of conquest. . . . *every man*. As a punishment for what they had done, and to prevent future troublesome
 - 15 opposition. . . . *As*. This was the pedigree of the command. God commanded Moses. Moses commanded Joshua. Joshua, in obeying Moses, was therefore obeying God. So the Divine will has come to us by his servants the prophets; and especially by his Son (Heb. i. 1).
- Curtis, Outlines of Scrip. Hist.* 13. *S. J. C.* i. 256 *R. B. R.* iii. 356, 415, 417—428.

The Canaanites' Defence—the Israelites' Attack.

NOTE ON THE B. OF MEROM. "The B. of Beth-horon (less. 83) the most important B. of the conquest, because, being the first, it struck the decisive blow. In all such struggles there is usually one last effort for the defeated cause. This, in the subjugation of Canaan, was the B. of Merom. . . As the British chiefs were driven to the Land's End before the advance of the Saxon, so at this land's end of Palestine were gathered for this last struggle, not only the kings of the N. in the immediate neighbourhood, but from the desert-valley of the Jordan, S. of the Sea of Galilee, from the maritime plain of Philistia, from the heights above Sharon, and from the still unconquered Jebus, to the Hivite who 'dwelt in the valley of Baal-gad under Hermon,' . . . and when all these kings were met together they came and pitched together at the waters of Merom to fight against Israel" (*S. J. C.* i. 256-7).

I. THE CANAANITES' DEFENCE. Marked by (1.) *The alliance of many kings*. Hitherto from 1 to 5 or 6 had deemed themselves sufficient. (Now, read *vv.* 1—3.) Each of these kings little more than a petty chieftain, but powerful among his people. (2.) *The gathering of a huge host* (*v.* 4). Perhaps rather unwieldy from size, and various constituents. But consisting of men made desperate by despair. They must conquer or perish. Fighting for hearths, homes, and country. (3.) *The selection of a strong position*. They had the advantage of fighting on ground of their own choosing, in their own territory. Natural and artificial defences. (4.) *The employment of the best-known instruments*. Horses and chariots very many. Of these the Israelites do not appear to have had any. Both were held to be invincible in war.

II. THE ISRAELITES' ATTACK. (1.) *Led by one leader in person*. Joshua, whose name (deliverer), and whose previous victories, would inspire courage, and the hope of certain and easy victory; and whose one mind prevented division of opinion, and preserved unity of action, &c. (2.) *Made by one united host*. One people, of one ancestry, fighting for the land of promise. (3.) *Marked by rapid execution*. Joshua did not wait for the foe to change, or improve his plans, to augment his resources, or perfect his defences. Pushed on at once to the scene of conflict. Decision of character. He was famous for this. He knew the moral advantage of making an attack and not waiting for one. (4.) *Marked by a complete victory*. He defeated their combined army, besieged, pillaged, and burned their cities; and thus completed the conquest of Canaan. Future battles were resistances of invasion, for the most part.

LEARN—I. Impossibility of successful resistance to the purposes of God.

II. Leave no strong hold of sin unattacked. These small northern tribes together formed a strong foe. Might have been looked upon with contempt by the victors of Beth-horon. In that case they had grown stronger, and falling upon Israel unawares, might have hindered the enjoyment and quiet possession of the promised land.

B.C. cir. 1427. Jos. xxiv. 1—25.

- 1 *Joshua*, being now an aged man (xxiii. 1, 2), and near his end (v. 14). . . *all tribes*, i. e. all the elders, heads, princes of the people. . . *Shechem*, sacred in every Jewish memory (Gen. xii. 6; xxxiii. 18—20). . . *called*. This was how *all the tribes* were gathered, i. e. by their representatives. *before God*. Either the ark was brought to this spot, or the assembly was
- 2 of a special religious character. . . *Joshua said*. He recounted the leading points in the past history (Heb. x. 32; 2 Pet. i. 13; iii. 1). . . *flood*, Euphrates. . . *Terah* (less. 11). . . *other gods* (Gen. xxxi. 19, 30, 32, 53; xxxv. 4). . . *took*, called. . . *led* (Gen. xii. 1—4; Ne. ix. 7, 8; Ac. vii. 2, 3). . . *gave*. *Isaac*, when a child could not reasonably be expected (Gen. xvii. 17—19; xviii. 13—15). . . *gave*, still fulfilling the promise. . . *Jacob* . *Esau*. The youngest, who obtained the birthright, is named first. . . *mount Seir*, S. of D. Sea. . . *Jacob*, in whose seed the promise was to be fulfilled. . . *children*, 12 patriarchs. . . *went*. *Egypt*, and became a great
- 5 multitude. . . *sent Moses*. *Aaron* (less. 51), to punish Egypt, and deliver
- 6,7 *Israel*. . . *plagued* (less. 53). . . *sea* (less. 55). . . *long season*, 40 years.
- 8 Made so long by sin and folly of the people (Num. xiv. 34). . . *Amorites*, here and elsewhere (Gen. xv. 16) put for *all the inhabitants*. . . *other side*, E. of Jordan. . . *fought* (Num. xiii. 10). . . *Balak*. *Balaam* (less. 77). . .
- 10,11 *blessed*. *still*, though he would fain have cursed. . . *went over* (less. 81).
- 12 *Jericho* (less. 82). . . *hornet*, Heb. *tzireah* (*vespa crabo*), kind of wasp. Very large, active, fierce. Sting severe, sometimes fatal. Still abounds in Palestine. Their arms are two fine darts, barbed and invisible to naked eye. Each moves in a grooved sheath, which is often mistaken for the sting. On entering the flesh a drop of subtle poison is injected. He who had prolonged the daylight, and sent the storm at the great battle of Beth-horon (less. 83), &c., could easily send swarms of these terrible insects. . . *not* .
- 13 *sword*. *bow*. The battle is the Lord's, he fighteth for you. . . *given*, according to my promise, not your merit (Tit. iii. 5). . . *Now therefore*. Because I have done these great things for you, and been so faithful to my promise. *fear*, for you see how God can punish sin. . . *sincerity*, honesty of purpose. *truth*, without hypocrisy. . . *gods*, idols. *Teraphim* (less. 27). . . *fathers*, ancestors. . . *flood*, Euphrates (v. 3). . . *in Egypt*, where they had either adopted the old gods of Terah, or the gods of Egypt. From Ex. xxxii.
- 15 1—35 the latter appears probable. . . *serve*. *Lord*, who alone is worthy. *evil*, unprofitable, after all I have said. . . *choose*, by comparing the gods of the heathen with the great Jehovah. . . *this day*, in the presence of that God who has done so much for you. . . *gods*. *fathers*, which Abraham was called to abandon. . . *or of*. *Amorites*, which were unable to save their worshippers. . . *land*. *dwell*. God having vanquished all worshippers of idols, and given you their country. . . *as me*. This is my decision fear-
- 16 lessly given as an example. . . *answered*, convinced by argument and
- 17 example. . . *For*, they acknowledge that the reasons given were sufficient.
- 18,19 *we also*, as well as Joshua our leader. . . *Ye cannot*. They could not of their own strength and will. He would prove their steadfastness. . . *for* : consider his character whom you promise to serve, and therefore what manner
- 20 of people ye ought to be. . . *If*. *forsake*. Terrible to promise and break
- 21 your word with God. . . *Nay*, we are resolved. We will take the respon-
- 22 sibility, incur the peril. . . *witnesses*. *yourselves*. Your own conscience
- 23 will be witness, judge, executioner. . . *among you*. They were to search for, and destroy all relics of idolatry.

His Exhortation—His Resolution—His Departure.

- I. HIS EXHORTATION. (1.) *To whom.* In the presence of all the tribes, gathered representatively at Shechem. They were the parties interested. The elders would make known to the people elsewhere, in other tribal gatherings. (2.) *At what time.* One of importance to the nation. It had at length obtained firm foot-hold in the promised land. Rest threatened relaxation of effort; and self-government, forgetfulness of God. It was about to lose the influential presence of its great leader. One of importance to Joshua. He was near his end. Must do quickly what remained. Had worsted the enemies of Israel, and now would deal with Israel's fickleness. (3.) *After what fashion.* Rehearses history of the past. Extols the God of their fathers. Reminds them of His faithfulness, mercy, holiness. Appeals to them to serve God, put away idolatry, subdue the remnant of their foes. Urges them to remember the consequences of relapse. Calls for prompt decision.
- II. HIS RESOLUTION. "As for me and my house," &c., v. 15. (1.) *It was wise.* None better could be served. A good master, by good works, for a great reward. (2.) *It was prompt.* "This day." Any argument that would be valid in the future, is valid now. *Now* he blesses, calls, saves, and should *now* be served. (3.) *It was pious.* Men are servants either to sin or holiness. If they do not serve God, they will serve Satan. Spirit and effects of either service. (4.) *It was modest.* He was not proudly resolving what he knew nothing of. He had tried this service, and had seen for many years the consequence to the nation and individuals of disobedience. They all knew how Joshua had served the Lord.
- III. HIS DEPARTURE. See the close of the chapter, vv. 26—33. (1.) He registered the words spoken by himself and the people. The exhortation and the promise. (2.) He set up a memorial-stone. Compare such stones, memorials of pious resolves and providential deliverances, with modern monuments. All who passed it in after times should be reminded of the old promise, and compare that promise with their after conduct. (3.) Dismisses the people to the inheritance he had helped them to win. Affecting farewell. The last he would see of many he had led to victory. (4.) He died, aged 110, full of years and honours. The memory of the just blessed. The people served God during his life and the lives of the elders who heard this exhortation (v. 31). Being dead, he yet for a long time after spoke in their memory of his words and character. "Words of wise—goads."

LEARN—

- I. Our work lasts as long as our life.
- II. Prompt decision in religion a personal and present duty.

B.C. cir. 1406. Jud. iii. 8—31.

- 8 *Therefore*, because they had not withstood the test wherewith they were proved (*v.* 1, 4). God would have manly servants, able to serve him in the presence of danger, not mere children, who would obey him only in the absence of temptation. . . *sold*, delivered. . . *Chushan-rishathaim* (= most wicked Cushite, or lord of the land of the two rivers). . . *served*, were ruled by, and paid tribute to. . . *when .cried*, to cause them to do so were they thus sold. . . *deliverer*, Heb. saviour. . . *Othniel* (= Lion of God), brave. (See Jos. xv. 17; Jud. i. 13; 1 Ch. iv. 13; also 1 Ch. xxvii. 15.) . . *Kenaz* (= a hunt). . . *judged*, more in the sense of *ruled*, as military magistrates. They rather revealed God's judgment than administered their own. By rescuing his own and punishing other people God was judging by them.
- 11 *rest*, from invasion and war. . . *forty years*. During this time O. judged Israel. . . *evil*, directly O. was removed. No power of self-government. . . *strengthened*. And sin had weakened Israel (Ezek. xxx. 24). . . *Moab*, E. of D. Sea. . . *Ammon* (= strong people), desc. from Ben-ammi, s. of Lot (Gen. xix. 38). App. to worship Chemosh (Num. xxi. 29; Ju. xi. 24), or Moloch (1 Ki. xi. 5). . . *Amalek*, wandering and warlike people. . . *of palm trees*. Jericho (*i.* 16; Deut. xxxiv. 3). . . *served*, under tribute, &c. . .
- 15 *cried .Lord*, as they always did in trouble. . . *Ehud* (= union). . . *son*, descendant. . . *Gera* (= a berry). . . *lefthanded*, Heb. shut of his right hand. Yet a capable man morally and physically. . . *by him*: who, because he had this defect, might be regarded as harmless. . . *a present*, a subterfuge to gain an interview. . . *dagger*, a short-pointed, straight, double-edged sword, suitable for cut or thrust. . . *cubit*, ab. 20 in. . . *under .raiment*, for concealment. . . *right thigh*, as more convenient for his left hand. . . *very fat man*. "The better mark for Ehud, and less able to resist" (*Trapp*).
- 18 A king of fat men (*v.* 29, *marg.*). . . *an end*, of the journey and preliminaries. . . *people .bare*. The present weighty and valuable. . . *the present*, having offered it. . . *himself*, alone, the less likely to excite suspicion. . . *quarries*, images (*marg.*). . . *Gilgal*, place of the first encampment in Canaan; E. extremity of district of Jericho. . . *said*, by a messenger. . . *secret errand*, and therefore need a private interview. . . *Keep silence*. Till
- 20 I have cleared the room of visitors, &c. . . *summer parlour*. The fat man loved an easy posture and a cool place. . . *from God*. Words that must have startled the fat man. The dagger conveyed the message. . . *arose*, prob. to obtain aid. . . *thrust*. He lost no time, thrust with all his might. . . *haft*, the handle (A.S. *hæft*). . . *could not*, &c. The entrails protruded from the wound. Death instantaneous, without a groan. A terrible
- 23 message. . . *went forth*, having delivered his message. . . *locked*, to prevent a too speedy discovery, and with perfect collectedness. . . *came*, after some delay. . . *said*, and their conjecture caused further delay, and gave
- 25 Ehud time to escape. . . *covereth* (see *marg.*). . . *ashamed*, of their apparent neglect. . . *Seirath* (= a she-goat), prob. a rough *shaggy* place in the mts
- 27 of Ephraim. . . *trumpet*, perhaps a preconcerted signal. . . *of Israel*, in that district. . . *before*, as their leader. . . *fords .Jordan*, opp. Jericho. Thus preventing the Moabites from escaping, or receiving reinforcements. . .
- 29,30 *lusty* (*marg.*), stout and strong. . . *Israel*, once more the prevailer. . .
- 31 *Shamgar* (= ? warrior). Than this passage and *v.* 6 there is no other account of this famous chief. . . *Anath* (= an answer). . . *slew*, in the course of his various battles. . . *ox goad*: a stout staff, 2 in. thick and 8 ft long; armed at one end with a sharp point.

National Sins—National Judgments—National Helpers.

NOTE ON THE JUDGES. 1st Servitude, Chushan, 8 years (Jud. iii. 8). 1st Judge, Othniel (*v.* 9); land rest 40 years. 2nd S., Eglon, 18 years (*v.* 14). 2nd J., Ehud (*v.* 16); rest 80 years. 3rd J., Shamgar (*v.* 31). 3rd S., Jabin, 20 years (*iv.* 3). 4th J., Barak, 40 years (*v.* 31). 4th S., Midianites, 7 years (*vi.* 1). 5th J., Gideon, 40 years (*viii.* 28). [Abimelech, 3 years (*ix.* 22).] 6th J., Tola, 23 years (*x.* 1, 2). 7th J., Jair, 22 years (*x.* 3). 5th S., Philistines, &c., 18 years (*x.* 7, 8). 8th J., Jephthah, 6 years (*xii.* 7). 9th J., Ibzan, 7 years (*xii.* 8, 9). [Eli, H. Priest, 40 years.] 10th J., Elon, 10 years (*xii.* 11). 11th J., Abdon, 8 years (*xii.* 13, 14). 6th S., Philistines, 40 years (*xiii.* 1). 12th J., Samson, 20 years (*xv.* 20). 13th J., Samuel, 32 years. (Or, including Deborah, 14 J.) The chronology of Bks of Josh. and Jud. uncertain. This rule of the J. lasted 348 years; stated, in Ac. *xiii.* 20, to have been 450 years; which is supposed to include the 120 years under Saul, David, and Solomon. (But see *K. D. in loc.*) The J. "decided cases with absolute authority, had no power to make new laws, or impose new burdens. They were protectors of law, defenders of religion, avengers of crimes, especially idolatry" (*Calmet*).

I. NATIONAL SINS. (1.) In the case of Israel, idolatry. This, as their existence was a protest against Polytheism and idol-worship, their great sin. Led to other evils. When God was forsaken each man walked in his own way. The spiritual worship of true God conservative of morality and order. (2.) In the case of other lands. Nations often marked by special sins. What is ours? Is it drunkenness?

. . . "a custom
More honoured in the breach than the observance;
This heavy-headed revel, east and west,
Makes us traduced, and taxed of other nations;"

Or is it some other sin, as mammon-worship, covetousness, or formality?

II. NATIONAL JUDGMENTS. Sin and punishment inseparable. Sometimes the punishment is a judgment from without, sometimes the natural outgrowth of sin within. In the case of Israel, both. From the root of idolatry grew up licentiousness, pride, &c., and ultimately God permitted invasion and conquest by idolatrous powers. The people were filled with the fruit of their own ways. Individuals suffer in national sins and judgments.

III. NATIONAL HELPERS. The great Helper. He had never forgotten. Raised up other helpers. From unexpected sources. Poor and despised man, that the power might be seen to be of God. Man's extremity, God's opportunity. We are never so weak but he can strengthen; nor ever so lost but he can save. A present help in trouble should be a constant object of reverence and worship. Often forgotten in prosperity, and only remembered in adversity. Helpers in the present day, good men, and good institutions (*ill.* teachers, and Sunday Schools).

B.C. cir. 1305. Jud. iv. 1—24.

- 1 *again*, as often before: and not warned by repeated judgments. . . *when Ehud dead*, not till then. One God-fearing man restrained the nation.
- 2 *Jabin* (= whom God sees), the second of this name (Jos. xi. 1—13; xii. 19). . . *Hazor*, which seems to have been rebuilt (Jos. xi. 10, 13). . . *Sisera* (= battle array), commander-in-chief of army of Jabin. . . *Harosheth* (= ? manufactory), site identified with a double mound called *Harothieh*, ab. 8 m. from Megiddo, at entrance of Pass to Esdraelon from plain of
- 3 Acre. . . *Gentiles*, people not Hebrews. . . *cried*, in terror. . . *nine hundred iron*, and appeared invincible. . . *twenty years*. It took all that time to
- 4 extort this cry. . . *Deborah* (what other D. ? Gen. xxxv. 8, and less. 22)
- 5 (= bee). . . *Lapidoth* (= torches). Nothing more said of him. . . *dwelt*, in a tent. . . *palm tree*, ? Baal-tamar (Ju. xx. 33), near Gibeah of Benjamin. . . *Ramah* (= high place), near Gibeah and Geba. . . *Beth-el* (= house of God), now *Beitin*, a heap of ruins, 12 m. N. of Jerusalem. . . *judgment*,
- 6 advice, instruction, arbitration. . . *Barak* (= lightning), to whom she was divinely directed. . . *Abinoam* (= father of pleasantness). . . *Kedesh-naphtali* (= sanctuary), in extreme N. of Palestine. Mod. village of *Küdes* is 4 m. W. from L. Merom. . . *Hath not*, &c. = he hath, &c. *Tabor* (= mound), now *Jebel el-Tur*. An insulated limestone rock, 1900 ft high. S.W. of S. of Galilee. . . *take*, &c. He was there to rally the tribes of
- 7 the N. . . *I*, the Lord. . . *draw*, prompt to follow. . . *Kishon*, which rises near Dothan, S. of Tabor, and flows N.W. into the M. Sea, near mt
- 8 Carmel. . . *If*. Barak knew that her presence would inspire his followers
- 9 with confidence, and be useful to him. . . *not honour*, but the Lord's. . .
- 10 *woman* (1 Cor. i. 27—29). . . *to Kedesh*, to call the N. to arms. . . *Heber*
- 11 (= a passer over). . . *Kenites* (= ? smiths), a nomadic tribe. . . *Hobab* (= beloved) (Num. x. 29—32), called also Jethro. . . *Zaanaim* (= re-
- 12,13 *movals*). . . *they*, rumour, or spies, scouts. . . *gathered* (*marg.*). . . *Kishon*, the swollen waters of which made the ground swampy, and unfit
- 14 for chariots. . . *before thee*. Employing the river to aid the victory. . .
- 15 *discomfited*, perplexed. He could not use his iron chariots in the marshy ground. . . *off chariot*. Could he have used it, even for flight, he would.
- 16 *Harosheth*, home of Sisera, and head-quarters. B. hoped to capture S., but see vv. 9, 21. . . *his feet*, for greater speed and to escape notice. . .
- 17,18 *Jael*. Whose work was foretold by Deborah, v. 9. . . *turn in*, to rest. *my lord*: she knew him. . . *fear not*. He had all the sad marks of a defeated man, and had travelled far. . . *covered*, &c. He was thoroughly weary. . .
- 19 *little water*. He asked for no food. . . *milk*, which kindness would lull all
- 20 suspicion, if any remained. . . *any man*. Although so far from the Kishon,
- 21 he feared pursuit. . . *nail tent*, a tent-pin of iron, to which the cords
- 22 were fastened. . . *ground*, driving it through the head. . . *Barak*, and his
- 23 forces. . . *Jael*, the woman of whom Deborah spake (v. 9). . . *So God*. It
- 24 was he who had given them the victory (Ju. v. 20). . . *prospered*. Heb. going, went, and was hard against. Referring to the song of Deborah, Stanley says (*S. J. C.* i. 328), "In it we have the only prophetic utterance that breaks the silence between Moses and Samuel. Hers is the one voice of inspiration (in the full sense of the word) that breaks out in the Book of Judges. In her song are gathered up all the lessons which the rest of the book teaches indirectly. Hers is the life, both in her own history and in the whole period, that expresses the feelings and thoughts of thousands, who were silent till 'she, Deborah, arose a mother in Israel.'"

The Enemies, Friends, and Deliverance of Israel.

NOTE ON B. OF MEGIDDO. "It was the enemies of *Jehovah* who had perished. It was the securing of the true religion from the attempt of the old Paganism to recover its ascendancy in the Holy Land. It ranks in the sacred history, next after the B. of Beth-horon, amongst the religious battles of the world" (*S. J. C.* i. 328). Milman says (*Hist. Jews*, vol. i.), "Deborah's hymn of triumph was worthy of the victory. The solemn religious commencement, the picturesque description of the state of the country, the mustering of the troops from all quarters, the sudden transition to the most contemptuous sarcasm against the tribes that stood aloof, the life, fire, and energy of the battle, the bitter pathos of the close—lyric poetry has nothing in any language which can surpass the boldness and animation of this striking production."

- I. THE ENEMIES OF ISRAEL. (1.) The remnants of the old Canaanitish tribes under Jabin "*the wise*." Wisdom an important attribute of kings. Jabin had not the higher wisdom. His wisdom was worldly policy, and mere king-craft. His conquest of Israel not the fruit of *his* understanding, but of a higher wisdom. Permitted for judicial purposes (*v.* 1, 2). The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. Jabin and his followers Pagans. (2.) Paganism, introduced by them, the worst enemy of Israel. An irruption of the old conquered heathenism. (So sometimes in men under grace, some old sin will get the supremacy and retain it for a time.) (3.) A cruel enemy (*v.* 3). Even the *tender mercies* of the wicked are cruel. (4.) Led by a redoubtable chieftain—Sisera. "A bold, bad man."
- II. THE FRIENDS OF ISRAEL. (1.) God their best friend. He had not cast them off, but concealed his face. For a time and for discipline, had withdrawn his favour and aid. They cried, and he heard and helped. He raised up other friends. (2.) There was *Barak*, or *Barka* = lightning, ready among the hills of the north. Waiting for the call. Willing in the day of God's power. (3.) Chiefly, there was *Deborah*, a mother in Israel, whose spiritual children awaited, and then obeyed, her command. Happy the "mother" whose children are willing to be led in the battle of life for God and his truth. Happy the children who have a "mother" that fears God. (4.) *Jael* did good service. Only a woman. Out of weakness became strong. Did what Barak could not do. Killed Sisera.
- III. THE DELIVERANCE OF ISRAEL. After 20 years' oppression Israel rebels. Jabin marches N. to quell the rebellion. The waters of Megiddo 4 streams of the Kishon. Jabin's forces entangled in the morass. Completely defeated and scattered. Sisera flies. The tent scene with Jael. So thorough was the victory that "the land had rest forty years" (*v.* 31).
- LEARN—I. Sin entails punishment. II. God will not cast off for ever. III. He can secure our deliverance by unlikely instruments. May not the honourable mention and use of such women as Deborah, &c., be designed to induce a right feeling towards women in an age and part of the world where they were often slighted?

B.C. 1245. Jud. vii. 1—25.

- 1 *Jerubbaal* (less. 89; vi. 32). . . *Gideon* (= *tree-feller*, i. e. impetuous warrior). For his history see vi. 1—32. . . *all people*, 32,000; yet with this great army his heart failed him, and God reassured him by a sign, vi. 36—40. . . *Harod*, prob. fountain of Jezreel (1 Sam. xxix. 1), now 'Ain-Jalud. . . *Midianites*, desc. from Abraham by Keturah. Wandering tribes with various chiefs, vassals of Amorites (Josh. xiii. 21). Had now prevailed over Israel 7 yrs (vi. 1). . . *Moreh*, possibly the "Little Hermon," now *Jebel el-Duhy*. . . *valley*, of Jezreel. The central arm of plain of
- 2 Esdraelon (2 Sam. ii. 9; iv. 4; Hos. ii. 22). . . *too many*, to admit of my intervention being conspicuously manifest. . . *vaunt* (Fr. *vanter*, from Lat. *vanus*, empty); (Deut. xxxii. 27; Isa. ii. 11, 17; Je. ix. 23; 1 Cor. i. 29). . . *proclaim*, acc. to law (Deut. xx. 8). . . *fearful*, army of Midian = 135,000 (viii. 10). . . *Gilead*. A difficulty here; or was there another G., W. of Jordan, where Gideon now was? Some think "Gilead" should be "Gilboa." . . *returned*, more than two out of three. They
- 4 would have been of the greatest boasters had they remained. . . *too many*, for the purpose (Ps. xxxiii. 16). . . *try*, prove by a sign. . . *go not go*, few or many, you shall rest in my will. . . *lappeth*, conveying the water to the mouth by the hand. . . *boweth down*, and laying down weapons,
- 6 &c., to do so. . . *three hundred*, only would not put their weapons aside
- 7 to drink. In their thirst remembered they were soldiers. . . *By save*,
- 8 defeating 135,000. . . *victuals trumpets*. The 300 having what the 10,000 had; so that there was a trumpet each. . . *beneath him*. Gideon
- 9 and his 300 were concealed in the hill. . . *night*. Gideon has another sign.
- 10 *Phurah* (= bough), armour-bearer. Faithful and brave. . . *host*, sleep-
- 11 ing or talking about their watch-fires. . . *strengthened*, being encouraged
- 12 by what you hear. . . *outside*, in a concealed way. . . *sand*, seeming
- 13 countless to Gideon. . . *dream*. The relation of it discouraged the soldier, and strengthened Gideon. . . *cake barley*, a small and contemptible thing. . . *tumbled*, as hurled by a mighty hand. . . *tent smote fell overturned*, &c. A large tent, with its poles, cords, furniture, completely scat-
- 14 tered by this small cake. . . *save Gideon*, whom they had regarded as a
- 15 poor and contemptible foe. . . *worshipped*, gave praise to God. . . *three*
- 16 *companies*, for an attack on three sides at once. . . *lamps*, or torches.
- 17, 18 *do likewise*. God will teach me, and I will teach you. . . *blow trumpet*, as the first signal when the right time has come. . . *all me*, the 100 in my band. . . *every side*, where you are posted. . . *say*, shout the
- 19 battle-cry. . . *beginning watch*, ab. midnight. . . *blew trumpets*, which would not only arouse the camp, but suggest the presence of a great army, since trumpeters were generally few in proportion to others. . . *brake pitchers*. A terrible sound in the night, like the clashing of swords and
- 20 shields, &c. . . *three companies*. The Midianites would deem they were surrounded, and attacked by a vast army. . . *left right*. Even the 300
- 21 were warned. . . *his place*, appointed to him. . . *host ran cried fled*, in
- 22 the utmost consternation. . . *sword fellow*. In their great panic they fell upon each other. . . *Beth-shittah* (= acacia-place), nr Jordan. Robinson (*R. B. R.* iii. 219) and Porter (*Handb. for Syria and Pal.*, 648) suggest *Shutta*. So Thompson (*T. L. B.* 450).* . . *Zererath*, uncertain where. Prob. = Zereda = Zeredathah.

* If these are right, Van de Velde is wrong, since he places it N. of Gilboa.

Israel's Leader—Israel's Army—Israel's Surprise.

NOTE ON WATCHES (Ps. xc. 4). There were originally *three* W.: (1.) From sunset to 10 o'clock (Lam. ii. 19). (2.) 10—2 (Jud. vii. 19). (3.) 2 to sunrise. In after times there were *four*: (1.) "*Even*," 6—9. (2.) "*Midnight*," 9—12. (3.) "*Cock-crowing*," 12—3. (4.) "*Morning*," 3—6 (Matt. xiv. 25; Mark xiii. 25; Lu. xii. 38.)

NOTE ON B. OF JEZREEL. "The most immediate proof of the importance of this victory was, that it occasioned the first direct attempt to establish the kingly office, and render it perpetual in the house of Gideon (viii. 22). G. declines the office. But he reigns, notwithstanding, in all but regal state. His vast military mantle receives the spoils of the whole army (viii. 25). He combines, like David, the sacerdotal and the regal power. An image, clothed with a sacred ephod, is made of the Midianitish spoils, and his house at Ophrah becomes a sanctuary, and he apparently is known even to the Phœnicians (Eus. *Pr. Ev.* i. 9) as a priest" (*S. J. C.* i. 345-6).

I. ISRAEL'S LEADER. Gideon. Distinguished not by descent, or previous renown, or wealth; but by something better—goodness and the choice of God. (1.) He was a poor husbandman (vi. 15). Not likely in man's view to make a great leader. (2.) His character, *humble*. Called himself the least of his father's house (vi. 15). Somewhat mistrustful at the first. Needed a sign. God granted it, and made of him a great man. He has done this with very many poor men since (*ill.* Luther, &c.). Becomes in God's hands brave and hopeful. Will do anything God commands. This the way to be great and good.

II. ISRAEL'S ARMY. (1.) At first 32,000. Had they all fought and won, they might have thought *they* had got the victory. Hence God would reduce the number. Another reason. God would not have timid souls fight for him. 22,000 return. A serious defection in the presence of 135,000 enemies. (2.) Now 10,000. But even these are too many, for one who will not only deliver his people, but at the same time teach a great truth. The test, at the fountain of Harod. 9700 proved unfit by thinking more of their bodily wants than of their soldiers' duty. (3.) Only 300 left.

. . . . "Call to mind
The Hebrews, how, effeminate, they stoop'd
To ease their thirst; whence Gideon's ranks were thinn'd,
As he to Madian march'd adown the hills."—(*Dante*, *Purg.* xxiv. 136.)

III. ISRAEL'S SURPRISE. Scene. The sleeping host. Changing the watch. The two scouts: Gideon and his servant. The dream related. Forebodings of the foe. (This common to all enemies of truth. They know they must be overthrown. A little cake, &c. Christ the *bread* of life, despised, &c., yet conquers the world.) The 300 posted. Silence. Trumpets heard. A great blast of trumpets! Pitchers broken! Flashing of torches! (Enemies of truth frightened by light.) They fall upon each other. (No friendship among the wicked. The enemies of the cross attack each other).

B.C. 1235. Jud. ix. 1—21.

- 1 *Abimelech* (=royal father), an illegitimate son of Gideon (viii. 31). . . *Jerubbaal* (=let Baal plead), name given to Gideon by his father, Joash (vi. 28—32). . . *Shechem* (=shoulder-blade), Sichem (Gen. xii. 6; less. 33); Sychar (Jo. iv. 5; *C. D. N. T.* 20); Sychem (Ac. vii. 16). . . *mother's brethren*. The relatives of his mother would have more sympathy with him than those of his father's side. . . *communed*, took counsel privately. . .
- 2 *Speak*. Through them he would gain over the whole town. . . *threescore and ten* (viii. 30). . . *or one*. They were to suggest that it would be better to be ruled by one responsible person than by many of various opinions and interests. . . *remember, &c.* When you have talked them over, then recommend me as the *one*, in place of the 70. . . *your bone, &c.* A reason why
- 3 you should think of me, and a pledge that I will take care of you. . . *follow*,
- 4 espouse the cause of. . . *brother*, a good reason for a good cause. No reason good enough for a bad one. . . *Baal-berith* (=covenant lord), name under which Baal was worshipped at Shechem. They must have been people of influence to command the treasury. . . *vain, &c.*, men having
- 5 nothing useful to do (Prov. xii. 11; Ac. xvii. 5). . . *Ophrah*, site unknown (vi. 11, 24; viii. 27, 32). . . *one stone*. Prob. sacrificed them on one stone altar in revenge for the act of their father (vi. 28—32). . . *Jotham* (=Jehovah is upright). . . *Millo* (=a fortress), house of Millo=those who garrisoned the fortress. . . *plain*, or oak (Jos. xxiv. 26; 1 Ki. xii. 1, 20, 25). . . *mt Gerizim* (=mt of the Gerzites), opp. mt Ebal, and nr to Shechem. . .
- 6 *said*. This parable of J. is the most ancient fable in existence. . . *hearken as*, listen as thoughtfully when I speak as you desire God to listen when
- 8 you pray. . . *trees*, i. e. forest trees, cedars. *All*. men of Shechem. . . *olive* (less. 8). Wanting a king, they naturally first asked the most worthy of the
- 9 trees. The O., fruitful and valuable, was the first. . . *said*, humble in proportion to value. . . *leave*, better be a good tree than a disqualified king.
- 10,11 *fig tree*, another good tree. . . *fig said*. Humility a characteristic of
- 13 goodness. . . *vine*, still another good tree. . . *vine said*, proving its value
- 14 by its humility. . . *Then said all*, disappointed at these rebuffs. . . *bramble*, or thistle, no tree at all, worthless, vile, the fruit of the curse (Gen. iii. 18).
- 15 *bramble said* (worthless tree, ingenious *all*. to Abimelech), surprised at the unexpected honour. . . *If truth*. Helped out of the first surprise by native self-satisfaction: if you sincerely wish this thing. . . *shadow*, protection, care. The large trees trust in shadow of *small and straggling thorn*! . . . *if not*, if you are not sincere in this wish; if you have other objects in view. . . *fire. bramble*, the poor bramble shall be your destruction. . . *cedars*.
- 17 *All*. men of Shechem. . . *now*. Jotham explains the parable. . . *Abimelech*, he is the bramble I speak of. . . *well. Jerubbaal*. He insinuated that they
- 17 had dealt *ill*. . . *deserving*, some proof of which he then gives. . . *fought for*, not against, as you against him. . . *adventured*, imperilled. . . *son of. maidservant*, a person of low origin, a mere bramble. . . *because*, hence not in truth, as deserving of the honour and office, but because of his family
- 19 relationship. . . *then rejoice* (Isa. viii. 6; Phi. iii. 3; Ja. iv. 16). . .
- 20 *devour, &c.* Lack of mutual respect would inevitably lead to this. Abimelech's election being founded on convenience, and not reverence for him,
- 21 nor for the kingly office. . . *Beer* (=well), site uncertain. Perhaps same as Beeroth, now el-Bireh, 10 m. N. of Jerusalem on road to Nablous (or Sychar).

The Parable, Angus's Bible Hand-book, 146, 173, 276, 279.

Personal Ambition—Human Selection—Official Distinctions.

NOTES ON PARABLE. A parable is an allegory. "When the allegory is written in the style of history, and is confined to occurrences that may have taken place, it is called a PARABLE (*ill.* prodigal son, &c.), but when it contains statements of occurrences, which, from their very nature, could not have happened, it is called a FABLE" (*Angus*). The parables or fables of the *Old Test.* may be found Jud. ix. 7; 2 Sam. xii. 1; xiv. 6; 1 Ki. xx. 39; xxii. 19—23; 2 Ki. xiv. 9; Isa. v. 1. Orientals fond of, and much addicted to, figurative modes of speech. The great Teacher adopted this popular method (Matt. xiii. 3, 34, &c.). From Jotham's parable, or rather *fable*, we may learn—

- I. THAT THE MOST UNWORTHY MEN ARE SOMETIMES THE MOST AMBITIOUS. This the case with Abimelech. Nothing to recommend him but his relation to Gideon. *That* of a nature to have made a worthy man silent, unobtrusive. An illegitimate son. He makes capital out of the very thing that most would have been willing to conceal. Acc. to the fable, the bramble was quite willing to be the king of all the trees, even the cedars, his superiors in every respect (*ill.* the prodigal son).
- II. THAT HUMAN SELECTION OFTEN PROCEEDS UPON WRONG PRINCIPLES. *Com.* the case of Saul. His mere bodily stature a great thing with the thoughtless. David, at first, was passed by, by those who judged from appearances. Choice of A. ruled by personal feeling. He was a relative. Not the more fit on that account. Nay, *less*, for familiarity is often allied to contempt. Many things beside family interest and kindred the rule of choice. Note the results of such selection in the future character of Abimelech.
- III. THAT GOOD MORAL QUALITIES ARE GREATER THAN OFFICIAL DISTINCTIONS. The three trees that declined the kingship may be regarded as representing three different types of excellent moral character. (*a.*) *The olive.* Usefulness (*ill.* nature of olive). Better be useful than merely titled, &c. (*b.*) *Fig-tree.* Kindness, generosity (*ill.* nature of fig-tree, leafy, fruitful, &c.). (*c.*) *Vine.* Cheerfulness, gladness (*ill.* nature of vine, grapes, wine, &c.). Better to be a good *tree* than a bad king: how much better to be a worthy *man*, though humble and poor.

"The humblest being born is great,
If true to his degree,
His virtue illustrates his fate,
Whatever that may be!

Thus let us daily learn to love
Simplicity and worth;
For not the eagle, but the dove
Brought peace unto the earth!"
(*C. Swain.*)

"The greatest man is he who chooses the *right* with the most invincible resolution—who resists the sorest temptations from within and without."—"Nothing can make a man truly great but being truly good, and partaking of God's holiness" (*Henry*).

LEARN—I. Godliness with contentment is great gain.

II. Judge not by outside show (1 Sam. xvi. 7).

III. "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he" (Prov. xxiii. 7).

B.C. 1187. Jud. xi. 29—40.

- 29 *Spirit. Lord*, a special operation of the Spirit. Operation of S. various (Is. xi. 2). Extraordinary influence upon the human spirit (see *K. D. in loc.*). In this case superior wisdom, forethought, energy (*com.* iii. 9; 1 Sam. xix. 20, 23; 2 Ch. xx. 14, &c.). . . *Jephthah* (=whom God sets free), S. of Gilead (*v.* 1). Appears to have been Judge only of N.E. Israel. . . *Gilead*, dis. E. of Jordan; S. of r. Jarmuk; 60 m. long and 20 broad, from S. of Galilee to D. Sea. . . *Ammon*, desc. from Lot (Gen. xix. 38).
- 30 Now at war with Israel (*v.* 5). . . *vowed a vow*, a solemn promise (Gen. xxviii. 20; Num. xxx. 2; 1 Sam. i. 11). [He who made a vow must be able to perform (Num. xxx. 2—15); vow must not be wrong (Deut. xxiii. 18); vow must be kept (Deut. xxiii. 20—22; Ecc. v. 4, 5). Redeemable cases (Lev. xxvii. 11—13); cases irredeemable (Lev. xxiii. 9, 10). Was
- 31 not this of J. redeemable?] . . *whatsoever*, except what might be redeemed. If any unclean animal had come forth, *that* could not be
- 32 offered. . . *burnt offering* (see *anal.*). . . *passed over*, the border of Gilead into Ammon, E. of Gilead. . . *Lord delivered*, because of his own gracious purpose, and not because of Jephthah's vow. Without the vow, the
- 33 result had been the same. . . *Aroer* (=ruins?), city. N. bank of Arnon (Deut. ii. 36; Jos. xii. 2; 1 Ch. v. 8), now called '*Ará'ir*'. . . *Minnith* (=allotment?), in a dis. rich in grain (Ezek. xxvii. 17). . . *twenty cities*.
- 34 The number of cities E. of Jordan very great (*Giant Cities*, 13). . . *Mizpeh*, E. of Jordan in mts of Gilead (Gen. xli. 39), hence called Mizpeh of Gilead, to dis. from G. in Judah. Is prob. = Ramath-mizpeh (Jos. xiii. 26) and Ramoth-Gilead. . . *behold*, a sad event. Though it could not be quite unanticipated, for who more likely to greet a victorious father than an only child, who sympathized with his great work? . . *timbrels* (less. 27). . . *dances*, common mode of expressing joy (Jud. xxi. 21; Ps. xxxv. 10; 2 Sam. vi. 14). There were also d. of pleasure and revelry (1 Sam. xxx. 16; Job xxi. 11; Lu. xv. 25) as well as of religious festivals, to which
- 35 this pertained. . . *only child*. No one else to perpetuate his house. . . *Alas*, his vow came to mind. . . *low*, in spirits. Sadness. . . *one trouble*. In truth this trouble was greater than the Ammonites. . . *opened mouth* (*v.* 11; Lev. xxvii. 28, 29; Num. xxx. 2—5; Ps. xv. 4). . . *cannot back* (xxi.
- 36 1—7; 1 Sam. xiv. 44, 45; Mat. xiv. 7—9). . . *said if*. She recognized the binding nature of such a vow. . . *to that*, whatever it may be. . . *forasmuch, &c.* Let that be considered more than me and our dear relation-
- 37 ship. . . *this thing*, of which he had now told her. . . *her virginity*. Why bewail this comparatively small thing, if her doom were death? . . *according vow*. And the nature of the vow must be understood by those who would understand the thing done. His words were (*v.* 31), "shall surely be the Lord's; and (*or*) I will offer it up," &c. The introduction of the partial *or* introduces the alternative, that if it were a person the dedication would be made to the service of the sanctuary; if a *proper* animal,
- 38 or thing, it would be offered on the altar. . . *two months*, of liberty, before
- 39 perpetual restraint. . . *knew no man*. Certainly not needful to be mentioned, because a mere matter of course, if she were put to death. . . *custom*, became a rule so long as she lived. . . *daughter. Israel*, her old companions (*v.* 38). . . *yearly*, year by year. . . *lament*, to praise, comfort. They went to condole with her.

Keil and Delitzsch, in loc. S. J. C. i. 353. P. C. i. 159. Art. "*Jephthah*" in S. B. D. K. E. B. L. T. B. K. K. D. B. I. ii. 392.

Jephthah's Vow—Jephthah's Daughter.

WAS JEPHTHAH'S DAU. DEVOTED TO VIRGINITY OR DEATH? The latter is the popular view, but arguments for the former (*Dr W. L. Alexander, &c.*) deserve consideration. (1.) J. must have expected to meet a *human* being on his return. (2.) Clearly meant to *offer* such being in some way to the *Lord*. (3.) As a worshipper of Jehovah, he must have known that a human sacrifice would be *abominated* by Him. (4.) His *own feelings*, too, would revolt from such an act. (5.) Would a *Judge* do what even the people detested? (2 Ki. iii. 27). (6.) The *words* of the vow do not necessarily mean a burnt-offering. They are, "It shall be to the Lord," or "I will offer it for an offering." (7.) A man might vow to the Lord *persons* or animals (Lev. xxvii. 1—13); the *former* being redeemable, the latter not, save unclean animals. (8.) He did acc. to his vow, but had she been offered as a sacrifice, so singular a case would surely have been stated. (9.) His daughter bewailed her *virginity*. Would she have thought so much of that if her doom were death? (10.) Why if she were put to death should it be added that "she knew no man?" (11.) The word *lament* should be *praise*, celebrate. Why praise if she were put to death? On the other hand, her virtue would merit perpetual celebration. (See *Tennyson's Poems*, 197.)

"My God, my land, my father—these did move
Me from my bliss of life, that nature gave,
Lower'd softly with a threefold cord of love,
Down to a silent grave.
And I went mourning, 'no fair Hebrew boy
Shall smile away my maiden blame among
The Hebrew mothers': emptied of all joy,
Leaving the dance and song."

- I. JEPHTHAH'S VOW. (1.) *Made when in trouble*. This no unusual thing, nor is it necessarily a wrong thing. Much depends on the motive. Right, if fruit of true repentance and faith. Wrong, if merely a bribe to Providence to remove a trouble. (2.) *Vows made when in trouble are apt to be forgotten* when the trouble is past. David an exception (Ps. xxii. 25). (3.) *His vow was rash*. Uncertain what or who might first meet him. If a human being, he must have purposed to redeem it. Could not offer it in sacrifice. What right had he over any other human being to such an extent? His vow could not give him that right. (4.) *His own entailed punishment*. The cutting off of his house.

"Take then no vow at random, ta'en with faith
Preserve it; yet not bent, as Jephthah once,
Blindly to execute a rash resolve
Whom better it had suited to exclaim,
'I have done ill' than to redeem his pledge
By doing worse."—(*Dante*, Par. v. 64).

- II. JEPHTHAH'S DAUGHTER. (1.) *An only child* (v. 34). (2.) *Rejoiced in her father's successes*. (3.) The innocent cause of much grief (v. 35). An only child sometimes occasions grief not so innocently. (4.) She *sympathized with her father* in his trouble, though at her own great cost. (5.) *Prepares for her sad lot*. Seeks two months' reprieve before the vow is performed. (6.) The memory of her sad fate cherished by the daughters of Israel.

B.C. 1136. Jud. xiv. 1—20.

- 1 *Samson* (=sunlike), native of Zorah, now 'Ain Shemsh (*T. L. B.* 565). T. of Dan, s. of Manoah. A man of unsurpassed strength and ungovernable will. Physically strong, morally weak. . . *went down*, through "wild rocky gorges." . . *Tinnath*, now 'Tibneh, not far from Wady Surar. The home of his wife (Gen. xxxviii. 12, 13; Josh. xv. 10—19, 43). . .
- 2 *Philistines* (see *anal.*). . . *mother*, name unknown. . . *get her*. Customary for the parents to negotiate marriages for their sons and daughters (*ill.*
- 3 Abraham, less. 21; Gen. xxiv. 49—51; xxxiv. 6, 8). . . *my people*, Israelites. Marriages with idolaters forbidden (Deut. vii. 3, 4; Josh. xiii. 12; Ezra ix. 11, 12). . . *pleaseth*. Heb. she is right in mine eyes. Too
- 4 often the only, or chief consideration (Prov. xxxi. 30). . . *of Lord*, of his permission, and to be overruled by him for bringing about the deliverance of Israel. . . *that he*, i. e. the Lord. . . *sought*, and would find it in events
- 5 following. . . *went*, to negotiate. . . *vineyards*, in the neighbourhood of the town. . . *young lion*, a lion in his vigour and strength, not old and
- 6 infirm (*com.* Is. xi. 6; xxxi. 4; Ezek. xxxii. 2). . . *Spirit Lord* (less. 90). Here, as a spirit of strength. . . *rent*, thus strengthened. . . *nothing*, no weapon. . . *told not*. Either thought little of it, or would not have them alarmed at the danger to which he had been exposed; or would not have
- 7 the fears of the Philistines excited by this proof of his strength. . . *pleased well*, she was willing to accept him. (The Jews say she was converted to
- 8 Judaism in this interview. Mere conjecture.) . . *time*, the time needful for negotiating. Some considerable time must have elapsed. Though the heat and many flesh-eating insects (*sarcophaga*) would hasten work of decomposition. . . *take*, marry. . . *bees honey*. There must have been time for decay of the lion, and building of honey-comb. Dr Thompson saw a swarm of hornets build their comb in the skull of dead camel. . .
- 9 *told not*, the story would have destroyed all relish for the honey (1 Ch. xi. 19). . . *feast*, which lasted a week (*v.* 12). . . *used*, most domestic incidents
- 10 so celebrated (*ill.* weaning, Gen. xxi. 18). . . *thirty* (Mat. ix. 15). . .
- 12 *I now*. This was prob. not the only riddle asked. It was *now* Samson's turn. . . *riddle*. Heb. something intricate. A dark or obscure saying (Ezra xvii. 2—10; 1 Ki. x. 1). . . *sheets* (=shirts). Under-garments of
- 13 woollen. . . *thirty*. He would give one each. . . *ye give*, each give him
- 14 one. . . *Put forth*. Agreeing to the terms. . . *eater* (=the lion). . . *meat*, food. . . *strong*, lion the strongest animal of the size. . . *sweetness*, honey (Ps. xix. 10; Prov. xxiv. 13). . . *three days*. It was proposed early in
- 15 the feast. . . *seventh day*. The LXX., Syriac, and Arabic read "the fourth day." . . *Entice*. They would by foul means learn the meaning, as S. by foul means provided the wherewithal to pay the wager. . . *burn thee*.
- 16 Rude men and times. Her fear should prompt her ingenuity. . . *wept*. really out of fear, though, as she pretended, because her husband kept a secret
- 17 from her. . . *wept seven days*, i. e. the rest of the seven days. . . *told her*.
- 18 Conquered by her tears, as afterwards by Delilah's caresses. . . *plowed heifer*.
- 19 Another dark saying. . . *And*. He must now provide the raiment he had promised. . . *Ashkelon*, or Askalon (=migration?). One of the 5 cities of Philistines, on shore of Mediterranean, between Gaza and Ashdod. Now *El-Jore*. . . *thirty men*, they had spoiled him through his wife, he paid them by spoiling their countrymen. . . *anger kindled*, against them, and
- 20 against his wife. . . *went up*, leaving his wife behind him. . . *companion*, his chief bridesman. Wrongs done by a friend cut the deepest.

The Riddle—the Solution.

NOTE ON LION. (1.) NAME. Heb. *ari* (and four other words). This, the common one, occurs ab. 90 times. *Felis leo, carnivora*. Once common in Palestine. Hence frequent allusions (2 Ki. xvii. 25, 26). (2.) DESCRIPTION. *Strength* (Jud. xiv. 8); *active* (De. xxxii. 22); *courage* (2 Sa. xvii. 10; Is. xxxi. 4); *voracious* (Ps. xvii. 12); *teeth* (Joel i. 6). (3.) TAKING PREY. *Roars* (Ps. xxxi. 4); *lurks* (Ps. x. 9); *rends* (Ps. vii. 2); *carries to den* (Nah. ii. 12). (4.) INHABITS—*forests* (Jer. v. 6); *thickets* (Jer. iv. 7); *mountains* (Cant. iv. 8). (5.) ATTACKS—*sheep* (1 Sa. xvii. 34; Am. iii. 12; Mi. v. 8); *men* (1 Ki. xiii. 24; xx. 36). (6.) SLAIN BY—*Samson*; *David* (1 Sa. xvii. 35); *Benaiah* (2 Sa. xxiii. 20). (7.) ILLUSTRATES—*Israel* (Nu. xxiv. 9); *Judah* (Ge. xlix. 9); *Gad* (De. xxxiii. 20); *God protecting* (Is. xxxi. 4); *God punishing* (Is. xxxviii. 13; Lam. iii. 10); *brave men* (2 Sa. i. 23); *cruel enemies* (Jer. xlix. 14; li. 38); *persecutors* (Ps. xxii. 13); *fears of slothful* (Prov. xxii. 13; xxiv. 13).

NOTE ON HONEY. Most travellers visiting Palestine in summer observe the abundance of honey stored up in hollow trees and crevices of rocks. "Land *flowing* with milk and *honey*." Found dropping from trees when wax melts by heat of sun. Wherever there are wild bees honey is an article of food. So in Arabia this day. (See 1 Sa. xiv. 24—30; 2 Sa. xvii. 29; Matt. iii. 4; Lu. xxiv. 41, 42.)

- I. THE RIDDLE. (1.) *When given*. First day of marriage feast. Riddles a favourite pastime in the East. Exercise of wit and ingenuity. (2.) *Terms*. The forfeit of either side equal in amount, but unequally distributed. Samson offered to furnish many articles himself. Some to each of his friends. Each of them to give him *one*, if they lost. He regarded his resources as equivalent to those of the thirty. (3.) *Nature*. Strange and puzzling. Terms contradictory. Eater—meat, strong—sweetness. Out of the strong eater sweet meat. The strong eater might suggest some wild and ravenous animal; but the *sweetness* would effectually baffle them.
- II. THE SOLUTION. (1.) *How obtained*. Surreptitiously. They threatened his wife, she coaxed her husband.

. . . "Weakly to a woman must reveal it,

O'ercome with importunity and tears.

O impotence of mind, in body strong!"—(Milton, *S. A.*, 50.)

They might win the answer, but sow jealousy and distrust between man and wife. Desire of victory made them blind to consequences. (2.) *Result*. They discovered the answer, but made Samson their enemy. His hatred to their race traceable to this act of theirs. (3.) *Analogies*. Many strong eaters out of whom sweetness has gone. *Work*. Eating time, skill, strength: producing health and competence, sweetening rest. *Affliction*. Eating pleasure, repose, &c.: producing often sweetness of profitable reflection and reformation, &c. *Lion of tribe of Judah*. Jesus armed with power to destroy, yet out of him went words sweeter than honey or the honey-comb, and the sweetness of redemption.

B.C. cir. 1245. Ruth ii. 1—23.

- 1 *Naomi* (=my pleasantness), an aged widow. Husband's name, Elimelech (=God his king), a Bethlehemite. During a famine in Israel, E. and N. and their two sons, Mahlon (=sickly, i. 2, 5; iv. 9, 10) and Chilion (=a pining), went into Moab. Here M. mar. Ruth (=female friend), and N. Orpah (=fawn, i. 4—11). The man and his two sons dying, N. and R. return to Bethlehem, O. being persuaded to remain in Moab. . . *kinsman* (iii. 12). . . *mighty wealth*. "Rich, yet religious—a rare bird" (*Trapp*). Boaz (=alacrity), second husband of R., father of Obed, ancestor of David
- 2 (1 Ch. ii. 11, 12; Matt. i. 5; Lu. iii. 32). . . *Ruth unto Naomi*. The younger asked advice of the elder, and good came of it. . . *glean* (Le. xix. 9, 10; xxii. 23; Deut. xxiv. 19, 21). . . *corn*, i. e. barley (i. 28). It was
- 3 ab. April. . . *hap*, fortune. Did not Providence guide her? . . *light* (A.S. *lihtan*), as a bird settles. . . *Bethlehem* (less. 95). . . *said. answered*. When
- 4 have we heard such salutations of masters and servants? . . *servant*, steward, overlooker. . . *damsel*, saw she was a stranger. Knew all the poor
- 5 of the neighbourhood. . . *servant. said*. He too had noticed, and inquired.
- 6 *I pray* (Prov. xviii. 23). . . *from morning*, several hours. . . *house, tent*,
- 7 where it seems she was resting when Boaz first saw her. . . *daughter*. B. much older than R. He would treat her as a dau. till he made her his wife. . . *maidens*: for protection. Would not have the beautiful stranger
- 8 used roughly by the men. . . *touch*. This he had thoughtfully done. . . *drink*.
- 9 He is attentive to her wants. . . *stranger*. We too were strangers when our
- 10 great Kinsman took knowledge of us. . . *fully. shewed*. He had heard of her before. The servant spoke of Naomi (v. 6) as one known to B. . . *mother-in-law*. B., the kinsman of N., kindly regarded R. for her filial love.
- 11 *recompense*, reward. . . *work*, of filial duty. . . *Lord. Israel*, who will be debtor to no man. . . *wings*. The bird brooding over its young illustrated
- 12 to the Jew, God's tender care (Deut. xxxii. 11; Ps. xvii. 8; xxxvi. 7; lvii. 1; lxi. 4; lxiii. 7; xci. 4; Matt. xxiii. 37). . . *comforted*, a widow,
- 13 and a stranger. . . *friendly*, Heb. to the heart. . . *vinegar*, i. e. light and somewhat sour wine usually mixed with olive oil (*C. D. N. T.* 200). . . *parched corn*, some of the new corn roasted on the spot, fit for use, being rubbed in the hands, favourite food in the East (*R. B.* ii. 394). . . *left*. Her morsel was more than she needed, and she reserved it for Naomi (v. 18).
- 14 *risen*, from resting in the tent. . . *glean* (Fr. *glaner*): formerly, a custom (not a right) in this country. Any person may *permit* or *prevent* it on his own grounds. . . *reproach*, Heb. shame her not; use her kindly in word
- 15 and deed. . . *let fall*. He would care for her, and thus for N. also. . .
- 16, 17, 18 *beat out*, the corn from the husk. . . *ephah*, 3 pecks and 3 pints. . . *city*,
- 19 Bethlehem. . . *said*, astonished at the quantity of corn. . . *shewed*, clearly explained. . . *man's name*. R. knew the name, but not the relationship.
- 20 Thus many know the great Kinsman by name only. . . *living*, two poor widows, one too old to glean with the other. . . *dead*, and to the living for the sake of the dead. . . *one (marg.)*, that hath a right to redeem. The "man that is near of kin" to us also. Plenteous redemption. "I know that my Redeemer liveth." . . *Ruth said*. This statement of kinship brought the kindness of B. afresh to mind, and gave it a significance she
- 21 did not understand before. . . *any. field*. She would be nowhere so welcome nor so well treated as in the field of B., her rich kinsman. So
- 22 let us glean in Christ's field of promise and doctrine. . . *kept fast*, obeying B. as we should obey Christ. . . *end. barley. wheat*. Through the summer.

The Poor Gleaner—the Rich Farmer—the Divine Kinsman.

NOTE ON BK. OF RUTH. It is one of those quiet corners of history which are the green spots of all time, and which appear to become greener and greener as they recede into the distance. Bethlehem is the starting-point. . . . We see amidst the cornfields, whence it derives its name, "the house of bread," the beautiful stranger gleaned the ears of corn after the reapers; we hear the exchange of salutation between the reapers and their master, "Jehovah be with you," "Jehovah bless thee." The Book of R. is, indeed, the link of connection between the old and the new. There was rejoicing over the birth of the child at Bethlehem which R. bare to Boaz; "and Naomi took the child and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse to it." It would seem as if there was already a kind of joyous foretaste of the birth and infancy which, in after times, was to be for ever associated with the name of Bethlehem (*S. J. C.* i. 302, 303).

- I. THE POOR GLEANER. *Ruth.* (1.) Her rare *beauty*. Attracted the notice of both the steward and his master. Beauty a gift. Moral beauty the best form of loveliness. *This* those may have who have not the other. (2.) Her *poverty*. Forced to glean for her subsistence. (3.) Her *modesty* (*r.* 10). (4.) Her *filial love*. Laboured to comfort and nourish Naomi. Sought and followed her advice. This love well known (*r.* 11). (5.) Her *friendlessness*. A widow. The grave of her husband far away. She is a stranger, in a strange land. (6.) Her *industry*. Worked many hours.

. . . . "the gleaner-maid,
Meek ancestress of him who sang the songs
Of sore repentance in his sorrowful mood."—(*Dante*, *Par.* xxxii. 7.)

- II. THE RICH FARMER. *Boaz.* (1.) *Wealthy*. Had fields and many servants. (2.) *Compassionate*. Knew, and took an interest in the poor. Inquired concerning Ruth. Took her under his care. Gave charge to others about her. (3.) *Pious*. His salutation to his men. (4.) *A good master*. Not only wished the best blessing for his men, but had that wish reciprocated. (5.) *Practical in his sympathy*. Kind deeds as well as kind words. Gave not only advice, but food.
- III. THE DIVINE KINSMAN. *Jesus Christ*, of whom we are reminded by many things in this history. (1.) He has a special regard for youth, more particularly for youth beset with trial and temptation. (2.) He speaks kind words. "Spake as never man spake." (3.) Does kind actions. Cares for the poor and the friendless. (4.) Approves obedience and filial love. (5.) Supplies food, the best of all—the bread of life. (6.) Will at last receive us to his home, to dwell for ever with him.

LEARN—

- I. To do our duty in our station, like Ruth.
- II. To be kind and thoughtful, like Boaz.
- III. To admire the Providence of God as here displayed.
- IV. To love the great Kinsman who has redeemed us.

B.C. 1143. 1 Sam. iii. 1—21.

- 1 *child*, only a child. God accepts the services of children. . . *ministered*, served, lowly but useful service. . . *the Lord*, the best Master for both children and men. . . *before*, under the direction of. . . *Eli*, who—like many more—had more comfort in the child of a stranger than in his own children (less. 94). . . *precious*, scarce. . . *open vision*, visible sign, audible
- 2,3 voice. . . *eyes.dim*, through both age and drowsiness. . . *ere*, before sunrise, when the lamp was dressed (Ex. xxx. 7; xxvii. 21). . . *the temple*, the tabernacle at Shiloh (=place of rest), a city in Ephraim, N. of Bethel (Josh. xviii. 1; Jud. xviii. 31; xxi. 12, 19, 21; 1 Sam. i. 3, 9; ii. 14; iii. 21). . . *to sleep*, near Eli, on whom he waited. . . *called*, with an audible voice. . . *Samuel*, by name. . . *he*, awakened by it. . . *here. I*. Would
- 5 that all would promptly answer when God calls. . . *ran*, diligence and
- 6 obedience. . . *to Eli*, thinking it was he who called. . . *called.again*. God often mercifully repeats, and *varies* his call. . . *thou didst*. He felt certain of it. . . *answered*, not peevishly at being disturbed. . . *my son*. A kind expression, and one that would strengthen the affection of Samuel. A
- 7 suggestion to teachers. . . *not.know*, as communicating his will specially to him. . . *word.revealed*, the mind and will of God concerning him, not
- 8 yet made known (Jer. ix. 24; Ac. xix. 2). . . *third time* (Job xxxiii. 14, 15). Showing God's gracious perseverance in making himself known. How many times more than *three* has he called us? . . . *arose.went*. Many would have lain still, thinking they had been trifled with. Samuel, sweet-tempered and obedient, had confidence in his teacher. . . *Eli*, who must have wondered at the strangeness of these visits. . . *perceived*, understood.
- 9 *Therefore*, not jealous, but glad. . . *Speak*, declare thy will. . . *servant*,
- 10 now and henceforth. . . *heareth*, and is willing to obey. . . *came.stood*. A set purpose, and prob. a visible appearance. . . *answered*, as directed. Well
- 11 for children who obey their teachers. . . *tingle*. With astonishment and
- 12 fear: as when a loud noise suddenly smites the ear. . . *Eli*, whose piety was very defective. . . *spoken*, by the prophet, ii. 29. . . *begin.end*. What he
- 13 *begins* he *finishes*. . . *because*, &c. Let not children be surprised if parents—with this example before them—seem sometimes harsh. . . *sons* (ii. 12).
- 14 *not.purged*. And hence if, as priests, they cannot be purified, they must
- 15 be ejected from their official relation. . . *feared*, to give pain to his beloved
- 16 teacher. . . *Eli*. Curious to know what God had revealed to a child, and
- 17 hidden from a man—a priest. . . *thing*. His conscience expects evil
- 18 tidings, and he would know the worst (Mic. ii. 7). . . *whit* (A.S. *whit*) =thing. . . *he said*, and may be imitated in his submission, as well as some other things. . . *seemeth.good*. If anything seem good to God it
- 19 must be good, however painful to us. . . *grew*, in years, stature, knowledge, grace. . . *with him*. He will be with all who love him in early youth (Prov. viii. 7; C. D. N. T. 73). . . *words fall*. He fulfilled all he
- 20 spake by Samuel (ix. 6; 1 Ki. viii. 56; Is. xlv. 26). . . *Dan.Beersheba*. Proverbial expression=throughout the length and breadth of the land. . .
- 21 *appeared again*, after long withdrawing and silence (v. 1). . . *by.word*. By prophetic revelation.

Hymns: "This night I lift my heart to thee" (*Bartholomew*); "Father and friend! thy light, thy love" (*S. S. Union*); "In thy name, O Lord, assembling" (*Kelly*).

D. B. N. S. i. 234. S. J. C. i. 373, 385. R. B. R. iii. 84, 86—89.

The Prophet—the Scholar—the Teacher—the Call.

NOTE ON PROPHETIC OFFICE. Root of *Nabi* (= Heb. prophet) sig. "to boil or bubble over." *Fig.* a fountain bursting from the heart of man, into which God has poured it. Hence *NABI* = *to pour forth excited utterances*. Prophet (*προφήτης*) = an *interpreter*, or *medium* of the Divine will. He is one who speaks for another. Nor merely *fore-teller*, nor *forth-teller*; but spokesman, expounder, interpreter of the Divine mind. The prophet might be either the predictor of future things, or the instructor of the present age, or both. I. THEIR WORK. *Medium* of Divine mind (Hos. xii. 10; Heb. i. 1); *messengers* (2 Ch. xxxvi. 15; Isa. xlv. 26); *servants* (Jer. xxxv. 15); *watchmen* (Eze. iii. 17). II. TITLES. *Men of God* (1 Sa. ix. 6); *prophets of G.* (Ezra v. 2); *Holy P.* (Lu. i. 70; Re. xviii. 20); *holy men of G.* (2 Pet. i. 21); *seers* (1 Sa. ix. 9). III. HOW TAUGHT. *By an audible voice* (Nu. xii. 8; 1 Sa. iii. 4—14. *By angels* (Dan. viii. 15—26). *By dreams* (Nu. xii. 6; Joel ii. 28). *By Holy Spirit* (Lu. i. 67; 1 Pet. i. 21). IV. THEIR TEACHING. *In name of Lord* (2 Ch. xxxiii. 18; Ja. v. 10). *In parables* (2 Sa. xii. 1—6; Is. v. 1—7; Eze. xvii. 2—10). V. THEIR CHARACTER. *Bold* (Eze. ii. 6; iii. 8, 9). *Faithful* (Eze. iii. 17—21). VI. MANNER. *Excitement* (Jer. xxiii. 9; Dan. vii. 28; Hab. iii. 2, 16). *Poetic* (De. xxxii. 14), *with music* (1 Sa. x. 5; 2 Ki. iii. 15). VII. MATTER. *Only what was received* (De. xviii. 20). *All that was received* (Jer. xxvi. 2). IX. KINDS. *Ordinary* (1 Sa. x. 5; xix. 20; 1 Ki. xviii. 4). *Extraordinary* (1 Sa. iii. 19—21; Isa. vi. 8, 9; Jer. i. 5; Ex. iv. 1—4). X. PERSONAL HABITS. *Dress* (2 Ki. i. 8; Zech. xiii. 4; Mat. iii. 4; Re. xi. 3). *No fixed home* (1 Ki. xviii. 10—12; xix. 3, 8, 15; 2 Ki. iv. 10). XI. COMMISSION. *Reprove the wicked* (2 Ki. xvii. 13; 2 Ch. xxiv. 19). *Denounce kings* (1 Sa. xv. 10, 16—19; 2 Sa. xii. 7—12; 1 Ki. xviii. 18). *Exhort the good* (2 Ch. xv. 1, 2, 7). *Predict the Messiah* (Lu. xxiv. 44; Jo. i. 45; Ac. iii. 24; x. 43). *Predict national ruin* (Is. xv. 1; xvii. 1; Jer. xlvii.—li.). XII. TREATMENT OF. *Persecuted* (2 Ch. xxxvi. 16; Matt. v. 12). *Imprisoned* (1 Ki. xxii. 27; Jer. xxxii. 2). *Put to death* (1 Ki. xviii. 13; xix. 10; Matt. xxiii. 34—37).

- I. THE SCHOLAR. Samuel. (1.) *Young*. (2.) *In the tabernacle*. God still speaks in his house. (3.) *His character*. (a.) Obedience first to Eli, and then to God, and both promptly. (b.) Sweetness of temper (*note on v. 8*). (4.) *Occupation*. Ministering, &c., with a sincere, loving, trusting heart.
- II. THE TEACHER. Eli. (1.) *Aged*. Experienced. Wise. (2.) *Influentia*. Judge and priest. (3.) *Kind*. Not angry at being disturbed. "My son," &c. (4.) *Piety too defective*. Over-indulgent to his own children. Best men imperfect. (5.) *Submissive*. Willing that the will of God should be done.
- III. THE CALL. (1.) *When*. Early morning. He calls in morning of life. (2.) *To whom*. A child. Children should serve God. (3.) *How*. Audible voice. Called by name. He knows us altogether. (4.) *Why*. The reason of Eli's fall, and of his house, should be publicly known, as a warning to all Israel.

B.C. 1116. 1 Sam. iv. 1—18.

- 1 *Samuel*, now about 40 years of age. . . *came*, came to pass, or was known to. . . *against Philistines*, who—Samson having died the year before, and Eli, judge and priest, a very infirm old man—now tried to recover their position in Canaan. . . *Eben-ezer* (=stone of help). Such was the name of this place afterwards; at the time when this history was written (v. 1; vii. 12) . . . *Aphek* (=strength), uncertain where *this A.* was. . . *battle* (=the b. was spread). . . *smitten*, defeated, but not routed. . . *people come*, being repulsed. . . *fetch ark*. They should have cried unto him whose sacred symbol it was. They superstitiously regarded it as a kind of charm. . .
- 4 *it save*. Apart from God the ark was a mere wooden coffer. . . *Shiloh* (less. 93). . . *dwelletlh*. Did they think to ensure his presence also, and thus? . . . of *Eli*, who prob. gave way to the solicitations of his sons. . . *Hophni* (=
- 5 boxer). . . *Phinehas* (=mouth of brass). . . *into camp*. They had better put the accursed thing—sin—out, than brought that holy thing—the ark—in. *shout*. At such a shout the walls of Jericho once fell down before that ark.
- 6,7 *heard*, it reached across the field. . . *afraid*. They—being idolaters—were also superstitious. . . *woe*. They looked upon defeat as almost inevitable.
- 8 *gods*. They knew not of one Almighty God. . . *smote*, &c., of which they had
- 9 heard many strange accounts. . . *Be strong*. They do not utterly despair.
- 10 *not servants*, inevitable if they were defeated. . . *smitten*, utterly defeated.
- 11 *ark taken*. God's saving presence not with it. It became a great trouble to the Philistines (v., vi.). . . *slain*, and they died by the visitation of God.
- 12 *ran*, impelled by awe and fear. . . of *Benjamin*, the tribe of B. . . *same day*. Hence this *Aphek* was near to *Shiloh*. . . *rent ashes*, the customary
- 13 tokens of great distress. . . *sat*, an old, infirm, and sorrowful man. . . *way-side*, near the gate that faced towards *Aphek*. . . *watching*, for news. . . *trembled ark*, concerning which he had clearer views than others. . . *all city*, the people of it. . . *cried*, in dismay. Thinking the Divine presence
- 14 inseparably bound up with the ark. . . *heard noise*, of the people congregated about the place. . . *came in*, through the crowd outside the city, into
- 15 the gate where *Eli* sat. . . *Now*, to explain what follows. . . *old*, a great age, when even trifles are burdens (Eccl. xii. 5). . . *dim*. Heb. were stiff. Physiologically correct. The muscles and nerves had parted with the
- 16 elasticity and sensitiveness of youth. . . *he said*, full of fear. . . *What done, lit.* what is the thing = "what's the news?" . . . *answered*, and the answer contained the story of a national, religious, and domestic calamity. The army defeated,—the ark taken,—two sons killed. . . *heard ark*, the chief
- 18 thing to trouble a judge and priest of Israel. . . *he fell*, in a faint. . . *brake*, was dislocated. . . *for old heavy*, which sufficiently accounted for the result. . . *died*, and the silver cord was loosed, and the golden bowl was broken, and the pitcher was broken at the fountain, and the wheel was broken at the cistern, and the dust returned to the earth as it was; and the spirit returned to God who gave it (Eccl. xii. 6, 7). . . *judged*, he performed the functions of a priest as well. "In the union of judge and priest in *Eli* we have a gradual approximation to the consolidation of power in the monarchy. . . this peculiarity is a temporary transition to the next stage, when the powers of priest and ruler were indeed united, not however in the person of the high priests, but of the kings and princes of Judah. The reign of *Eli*, therefore, combines in a remarkable manner the fall of the old and the rise of the new order" (*S. J. C.* i. 373).

S. J. C. i. 377—379.

Indulgent Father—Wicked Sons—National Calamity—Divine Ruler.

NOTE ON THE HISTORY, ETC. "Wherever the ark resided might be considered the temporary capital of the state. The present circumstances of the Hebrew history contributed to exalt still higher the sacerdotal power. The tabernacle and the ark were at Shiloh in the territory of Ephraim, from its fortunate central position the most powerful, as the least exposed to foreign invasion, of all the provinces. The northern and eastern tribes had enough to do to defend their frontiers; Judah, the great rival of Ephraim, now tamely acknowledged the dominion of the Philistines. Hence the uncontested pre-eminence of the Ephraimites led to a temporary union of a civil as well as religious supremacy in the high priest—Eli. But Eli was now old and almost blind; his criminal indulgence to his sons had brought disorder and licentiousness into the sacred ceremonies. . . . In the midst of this corruption the blameless Samuel grew up to manhood." (*Milman, Jew. His.* vol. i.)

- I. THE INDULGENT FATHER. *Eli.* (1.) A good man. The affectionate tutor of Samuel. Had great veneration for the ark. Submissive to the will of God. (2.) His goodness defective. One defect marred the rest (*Eccles.* x. 1). Too indulgent to his children. Did not sufficiently subordinate his feelings as a father to his duty as priest. His inability to restrain them in their office as priest the result, probably, of previous indulgence in other respects. He had let them have their own way in little matters, and they would not be ruled now in greater ones. His sad end.
 - II. THE WICKED SONS. *Hophni and Phineas.* (1.) *Their character. Self-willed.* Rejoiced in having their own way when young. Did not then see whither it would lead. Loved their father in proportion as he was indulgent. Such love not founded in respect. A little wholesome fear in youth had sweetened the love of their father in manhood. Restrained in youth, they had been better men. Superstitious. Having treated with scorn the old man's instructions, &c., concerning the shekinah, they had grown to regard the ark as a kind of charm; more a symbol of priestly office than of better things. (2.) *Their end. Violent.* Slain by the Philistines. *Retributive.* A punishment of their sin.
 - III. THE NATIONAL CALAMITY. (1.) The loss of the ark. This, as the dwelling of God, the source of their strength. Its historical associations, &c. (2.) The defeat of their army, and the triumph of the enemy. (3.) The death of the venerable Eli. Great and good men the stay of the people. Guides, &c.
 - IV. THE DIVINE RULER. *Jehovah,* who, during the time of the wickedness of H. and P., and foreseeing their end, was raising up Samuel to take the place of Eli as judge and prophet. "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help found."
- LEARN—I. To exercise a just restraint over the young and inexperienced. Present *smiles* may be won by indulgence, at the expense of future *tears*.
- II. Let not the young be impatient under control.

B.C. 1063. 1 Sam. xvi. 1—13.

- 1 *Lord*, to instruct and chide. . . *Samuel*, his servant, who should therefore perfectly agree with the will of his master. . . *mourn* (xv. 11). Sam. had anointed Saul; his reputation as prophet might seem at stake. . . *Saul*, who had greatly sinned. . . *I*, thy master and the wise God, who cannot err. . . *rejected* (xv. 23). . . *reigning*, and making the people as bad as himself (1 Ki. xvi. 26; 2 Ki. xxi. 11; Ps. xii. 8). . . *horn*, a flask made of a horn (1 Ki. i. 39). . . *Jesse* (=firm, strong), (Ru. iv. 17—22; Isa. xi. 1, 10; Matt. i. 5, 6; Lu. iii. 31, 32). . . *Bethlehemite*, so called because he lived at B. . . *sons*, of whom there were eight, seven only being named (1 Ch. ii. 13—16).
- 2 *kill me*, an admission not only of his own fear, but of Saul's character. Saul tried rather, to kill David. . . *said*, giving directions by observing which he might escape what he feared. . . *heifer*, a young cow. . . *to sacrifice*, which would be true. One is bound always to speak the *truth*, but not *always* to speak the whole truth, "and so tell that truth that the hearer shall not
- 3 believe a lie by it." . . *call*, summon. . . *show*, do, in spite of thy fears.
- 4 *anoint* (ix. 16; De. xvii. 14). . . *did*, and not, like Jonah, run away. . . *Beth-lehem* (=house of bread), B-Ephratah (=fruitful H. of B.: Jesus, the B. of life, Jo. vi. 48, born here, Lu. ii. 8—20; C. D. N. T. 2), ab. 6 m. S.W. of Jerusalem. . . *elders*, heads of families (our word alderman=old man). *trembled*. They knew that he was a prophet, and they were sinners. . .
- 5 *Peaceably* (Jo. iii. 17). . . *sanctify*, by washings and legal purifications (K. D. on Exod. xix. 10, 22). . . *he sanctified*, others s. themselves. *Sam.* s. those to whom he was specially sent. . . *called*, *sacrifice*, to take part
- 5 in it. . . *looked*, steadfastly on the commanding and martial bearing of . . . *Eliab* (=to whom God is father), eldest son=Elihu (1 Ch. xxvii. 18). . .
- 7 *surely*. He judged by appearances. . . *Lord said*, to correct this superficial view. . . *countenance*, *height* (com. 1 Sam. ix. 4; x. 23, 24; 2 Sam. xiv. 25; Ps. cxlvii. 10, 11; Prov. xxxi. 30). . . *heart* (Prov. xxiii. 7; Ps. vii.
- 8 9; Heb. iv. 13). . . *Abinaab* (=father of nobleness), second s. of Jesse (xvii. 13; 1 Ch. ii. 13). . . *said*, the prophet's heart received no sign. . .
- 9 *Shammah* (=astonishment), third son; also called Shimeah (2 Sam. xiii. 3, 32; xxi. 21), and Shimma (1 Ch. ii. 13), and Shimea (1 Ch. xx. 7).
- 10 *Again*, not besides, but including these three. . . *seven*, beginning with the eldest. . . *not chosen*. The choice is his. I have nothing to do with age or
- 11 appearance. If you are astonished, so am I also. . . *youngest*, who seems not to have been thought of till now. The least likely to become the head of this family, much less of the kingdom (Matt. xx. 16). . . *keepeth*, *sheep*, a humble but useful employment; needing great vigilance, patience, tenderness, judgment, courage. Jesus, the good Shepherd, born at Bethlehem, and desc. fr. David (C. D. N. T. 2). . . *fetch him* (Lu. xvi. 10; Matt. xxv. 23; Prov. xxii. 29). . . *sit down*, cease from this work of the
- 12 *Lord*. . . *till*, *come*, and we know the Lord's will. . . *sent*, knew *where* he would be found. Happy father who knows the absent son will be found at his work. . . *brought*, &c. Happy is he who is in duty's way when God calls. . . *ruddy*, red with the flush of health and excitement. . . *beautiful*, *goodly*, yet not for this was he chosen (1 Sam. xiii. 14; Ac. xiii. 22). . . *arise*. To your work as a prophet. . . *anoint*, set apart thus as king. . .
- 13 *brethren*, who were doubtless not pleased (xvii. 28). . . *Spirit*, *came*, the best blessing he had ever received. . . *David* (=beloved). . . *Ramah* (=a high place), birth-p. and residence of Samuel. In mt Ephraim. In full =Ramathaim-zophim (1 Sam. i. 1, 19; ii. 11; vii. 17; viii. 4, &c.).

By whom, upon whom, at what time, with what intent, and under what circumstances.

NOTE ON ANOINTING. (1.) *Ancient custom* (Ge. xxviii. 18 ; xxxv. 14). (2.) *Purpose*. Consecrating to God's service (Ex. xxx. 29). (3.) *Persons anointed*. (a.) Prophets (1 Ki. xix. 16 ; Is. lxi. 1). (b.) Priests (Ex. xl. 13—15). (c.) Kings (Ju. ix. 8 ; 1 Sa. ix. 16 ; 1 Ki. i. 24). (4.) *Their advantages*. (a.) Divine protection (1 Ch. xvi. 22 ; Ps. cv. 15). (b.) Immunity from injury, &c. (1 Sa. xxiv. 6 ; xxvi. 9 ; 2 Sa. i. 14, 15 ; xix. 21). (5.) Oil or ointment. (a.) Divinely prescribed (Ex. xxx. 23—25). (b.) Prepared by priests (1 Ch. ix. 30). (c.) Holy oil for ever (Ex. xxx. 32). (d.) Not to be imitated (Ex. xxx. 32 ; Eze. xxiii. 41). (e.) Not to be put on a stranger (Ex. xxx. 33). (6.) Illustrates anointing. (a.) Of Christ with Holy Ghost (Ps. xlv. 7 ; Is. lxi. 1 ; Lu. iv. 18). (b.) Of saints with Holy Ghost (1 Jo. ii. 27).

- I. BY WHOM. The prophet Samuel. The greatest man at that time in all Israel. An inspired man. (Had anointed Saul.) He did this at God's command. Has a special commission. Does it not of his own will. Indeed rather opposed than not, at the first.
 - II. UPON WHOM. David. A simple shepherd. Did not expect this honour. Was minding his flock. By doing *well* what he had to do, he was preparing for a greater trust and higher duties. He was God's choice. God looks at the heart. Saw simplicity, courage, &c., in the heart of David.
 - III. AT WHAT TIME. (1.) Time of Saul's sin. God had rejected him. Our sins may remove us from honour, &c. (2.) Time of Israel's peril. The nation likely to follow Saul to idolatry, and suffer the punishment of it. (3.) Time of Samuel's grief. God gives him a new work to do. Occupation a relief in trouble. If men worked more, they would weep less. Working for God will prevent weeping for sin. (4.) Time of David's youth, and shepherd life. Teaching him that God honoured a lowly calling when honestly followed, and had regard to uprightness of mind in lowliest circumstances.
 - IV. WITH WHAT INTENT? (1.) David should be king. This now could not be revoked. (2.) Prepared Samuel to recognize God's will in David ; not to encourage allegiance to Saul : to promote the interests of David. (3.) That David, being reminded of what was in store, might constantly seek the blessing of God, and foster right qualities of head and heart.
 - V. UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES. Scene in Bethlehem. Arrival of the great prophet leading a heifer. Gathering and question of the elders. Jesse and his sons. The old man's pride in his brave boys. Their astonishment, and his, and Samuel's, at their rejection. David sent for. Declared the future K. of Israel. Disappointment of the rest. David returns to his shepherding.
- LEARN—I. Sin blights our position and ruins our prospects (Saul).
 II. Good men will do God's will at all risks (Samuel).
 III. Men not judged by appearance (Eliab, &c.).
 IV. God meets men in the way of duty (David).

B.C. 1063. 1 Sam. xvii. 1—11; 32—58.

- 1 *Shochoh* (=branches, hedge), now prob. *esh-Shuweikeh*. . . *Azekah* (less.
2 83). . . *Ephes-dannim* (=boundary of blood). . . *Saul*, whose sin had
troubled his soul, and the kingdom. . . *Elah* (=terebinth), identified with
Wady es-Sunt="acacia valley," 14 m. S.W. fr. Jerusalem, 12 fr. Bethle-
3,4 hem. . . *one side. other*, in full view of each other. . . *went out*, twice a
day for 40 days. . . *champion*, Heb. a man between two. . . *Goliath*
(=great). . . *Gath* (=winepress), one of 5 cities of Philistines (Josh. xi. 22).
height, 11 ft 10 in. (*Ep. Cumberland*), or prob. 9 ft 6 in. (*Parkhurst*).
5,6 *armed*, clothed. . . *mail*, armour. . . *weight*, ab. 150 lbs. . . *greaves* (Fr.
grève, the shin), plates of brass (leg-harneys, *Wielif*). . . *target* (A.S. *targe*),
7 shield. Some (*K. D.*) say this was a reserve sword, or javelin. . . *beam*,
8 around which the warp is rolled. . . *one*, his armour-bearer. . . *choose*.
9 *man*. His size made him pot-valiant. How if he had been less? . . . *if. pre-*
10 *vail*. He was confident of the issue. . . *defy. armies*, in truth he only de-
11 fied any man who might be chosen. . . *afraid*. Even Saul, who was of
gigantic stature himself (1 Sam. ix. 2). . . (David, sent by his father, arrives
12 in the camp, and hears of the giant.) . . . *thy servant*, and yet the anointed
13 king. . . *not able*. He knew not David's source of help and strength. . .
14,36 *David said*, not boastfully, but to reassure the timid king. . . . *as one*.
He is but as a savage animal to me, and I have slain two of the fiercest of
the tribe, and will now try to deliver another lamb—Israel. . . *seeing*, &c.,
17 and this was the "cause" (v. 29). . . *The Lord*, not his own strength. . . *Go*.
18 Saul's confidence restored. . . *his armour*, too large and heavy for even the
19 soldiers. . . . *cannot go*, would wear no borrowed plumes. Besides, he
20 trusted in a better shield (Ps. v. 12; xxxiii. 20; cxv. 9). . . *staff*, his
shepherd's rod. Like Moses (Ex. iv. 2, 17, 20). . . *chose*, selected those
that were fit. Would not tempt God by taking at random. . . *five*, for
one or two might fail. . . *sling*, ancient and effective weapon (Ju. xx. 16;
21 2 Ki. iii. 25). . . *drew near*, boldly. . . *came on*, hearing that Israel had
22 found a champion. . . *looked about*, looking too high. . . *saw David*, and
presently felt him. . . . *a dog*. Truly David looked upon him as a poor, mad,
24 profane creature who needed chastising. . . *I. give*, windy words. He reck-
25 oned without his host (1 Ki. xx. 11). . . *said David*, who has also a
26 word to say. . . *earth. know*. That God, and not I, may get a great name.
27 *spear. sword*. Therefore I come without them (Ps. xx. 7). . . *came*, being
ready and enraged. . . *hasted*, eager to win a great name for God. . .
28,50 *smote. forehead*, not scared by his terrible visage. . . *fell*, stunned. . . *no*
sword. All could see whence the victory. . . *ran*, before G. could recover.
29 *cut. head*. Com. v. 46. . . *shouted*, in wonder and joy. Reaction after great
fear. . . *Ekron*, now 'Akir (T. L. B. 535), one of 5 cities of Philistines who
thought themselves in danger outside their own walls. . . *Shaarim* (=two
30 gates), prob. now *Sá'irah*. . . *spoiled*, pillaged. . . *head*, a trophy for the
31 nation. . . *armour*, a memento for himself. . . *whose son*. He had forgotten
32 (xiv. 15—23; see *anal.*). . . *Inquire*, but Abner soon gave the king an
33 opportunity of inquiring for himself. . . *David returned*, the welkin ring-
ing with shouts of praise and triumph (xviii. 6). . . *with head*, the proof
34 of his victory, and the fulfilment of his words (v. 36). . . *Whose son*. What
could it matter? Did he in a fit of generosity intend to reward David and
his house? or was the father anxious on the daughter's account (v. 25)? . . .
I. son, David as modest as he was brave. As true to his father on earth
as his Father in heaven. (See *C. D. N. T.* 97.)

Affrighted Israel—Boastful Philistia—Victory of Faith.

NOTE ON GIANTS. I. GIGANTIC RACES named in the Bible : (1.) The *Nephilim*. "There were giants (Nephilim)," &c. (Gen. vi. 4). That these N. were giants is clear from Nu. xiii. 32, 33, where the word again occurs. (2.) The *Rephaim* (Deut. ii. 10, &c.). II. GIGANTIC INDIVIDUALS: (1.) *Og*, K. of Bashan, one of last of Rephaim (De. iii. 11 ; Josh. xiii. 12), whose iron bedstead (or prob. iron-stone sarcophagus) measured 9 cubits by 4. (2.) *Goliath* (see notes). (3.) *Lachmi*, bro. of Goliath (1 Ch. xx. 5). (4.) *Ishbi-benob* (2 Sa. xxi. 16), one of the Rephaim. (5.) *Saph*, or *Sippai*, of the same race (2 Sa. xxi. 18 ; 1 Ch. xx. 5). (6.) A *Philistine*, name not given, slain by Jonathan, the nephew of David (2 Sa. xxi. 20 ; 1 Ch. xx. 6).

NOTE ON THE PLACE OF THIS HISTORY. Bp. Horsley thinks this battle was long *before* Saul's madness. (1.) D. was a youth when he slew Goliath (*vv.* 33, 42) ; but when introduced to Saul he was of full age (*xvi.* 18). (2.) This combat was his first appearance in public life, and first military exploit (*vv.* 36, 38, 39) ; but when introduced as a musician he was of established reputation as a man of war (*xvi.* 18). Prob. the incidents have been displaced. Read last 10 verses of *xvi.* between 9th and 10th verses of *xviii.*, and the apparent difficulty will be removed.

I. AFFRIGHTED ISRAEL. The entire army filled with fear, Saul and all the rest. They had lost their faith in God. "He that believeth shall not make haste." Yet had they considered, the rest of their enemies were but ordinary men. Only one giant. Among the foes of Israel only here and there an intellectual giant. The bulk are *very* ordinary men. If the giants may be so easily worsted, how of the rest? They are only brave while their leader stands and vapours.

II. BOASTFUL PHILISTIA. They must have been amused that their one giant should terrify an army. Yet they had not the courage to attack Israel. They put their biggest man in the front, and applaud ; but when he falls they run. Goliath the biggest man, and greatest boaster. "Haughty spirit goeth before a fall." Better have said less than done so little. Boasters, wholesale dealers in words. Talking easy. Profane boasting the worst kind.

III. VICTORY OF FAITH. Faith made :—(1.) the shepherd braver than the king (*com.* David and Saul). (2.) A country lad bolder than army of experienced soldiers. (3.) A stripling more truly courageous than the grim giant. By faith he saw Him who is invisible to mortal sense. Saw Him near, on his side, fighting for him. His faith did not permit him to neglect proper means. He was *used* to the sling, and *chose* the stones. We have a sling to use—speech : choose right words for stones. Prayer, &c. Or a good life is a good sling ; and good deeds are the stones. We may do great things through Him who fighteth for us.

LEARN—I. Not to be afraid of mere numbers. The Divine helper greater than all. II. Not to be daunted or led astray by boasters.

III. To do the best we can with what sling we have, remembering that "the weapons of *our* warfare are not carnal," &c.

B.C. cir. 1062. 1 Sam. xx. 1—42.

- 1 *fled*, in fear of Saul (xix.). . . *Naioth* (=habitations), nr Ramah. Perhaps suburbs of R., or buildings of school of prophets there (xix. 18—23). . . *Jonathan* (=whom Jehovah gave), s. of K. Saul, prob. the eldest. Very brave (1 Sam. xiii. 2, 3), but now chiefly remembered for his friendship for
- 2 David. . . *What done* (Ps. vii. 3—5). . . *shew me, lit.* uncover my ear=tell in a whisper, confidentially. Fig. borrowed from lifting up of the turban
- 3 to tell a secret. . . *sware*, solemnly assevered. . . *grace*, favour. . . *saith*, to his emissaries. . . *not know*, because he is David's friend. . . *step*. What-
- 4 ever step I take may land me there. *Then Jonathan*, wonderful friend-ship! By helping David he would lose his crown. . . *Whatsoever*. Knowing
- 5 the character of David, he could safely promise. . . *new moon*, feast of new
- 6 m. (Num. x. 10; xxviii. 11). . . *then say*. Doubtless it was David's inten-
 7 tion to go to B. if perchance the answer were favourable: as it was he
 7 went to Nob (xxi. 1) in another direction. . . *say*. By his answer I shall
- 8,9 know what to do. . . *covenant* (xviii. 3). . . *if knew*. He does not like to
 10 believe ill of his father. . . *Who tell*: for he who told, might reveal his
 11 hiding-place. . . *field*, open space of country, where they might be unseen
 12 and unheard. . . *Lord Israel*. God is solemnly appealed to as witness to
 13 this covenant. . . *sounded*, Heb. searched. . . *shew thee*, uncover, &c., as v.
- 14 2. . . *send away*, procure thy escape. . . *I die not*. J. fully believed in the
 certain ascendancy of David. Will not, like his father, oppose the Divine
- 15 will; but prepares for the future. . . *my house*, family. . . *Lord cut off*. J.
 16 believed God would do this. . . *made covenant*, and confirmed the c. already
 17,18 made (xviii. 3). . . *because*. See marg. . . *new moon*, beginning of the
 19 month. . . *stayed*, in concealment. . . *hide* (xix. 2), prob. in some cave. . . *Ezel*
 20 =that showeth the way. Perhaps a boundary mark. . . *I*, so standing that
 21,22 you, in the cave, may hear my voice. . . *hurt*, danger. . . *go way*, make
 23,24 good thy escape. . . *the matter*, subject of covenant (vv. 14, 15). . . *eat*
 25 *meat*, such a man keeping a sacred feast (Ps. l. 16—21). . . *Abner* (xvii.
 26,27 55). . . *clean*, purified. . . *son Jesse*, title David had assumed (xvii. 58).
 28,29 *answered*, as agreed (v. 6). . . *brother*, Eliab the eldest (xviii. 28). . .
 30,31 *confusion*, as a prince of the house of Saul, and heir to the crown. . . *he*.
 32 *die, lit.* he is the son of death. . . *what done?* A true reply would have been
 33 David's best defence. . . *cast*, such was his answer. . . *javelin*, a kind of
 34 short spear or dart thrown by the hand. . . *him*, his own son. . . *fierce*
 35 *anger*, at this attempt upon his life. . . *shame*, injustice. . . *morning*, of
 36,37 the third day. . . *time* (v. 19). . . *beyond*, Heb. to pass over him. . . *and*
 38 *said*, the words as agreed upon (v. 22). . . *speed*, *haste*, *stay not*, intended
 39 more for the ear of David than of the lad. . . *knew not*, for he might have
 40 told Saul. . . *artillery*, from Lat. *ars* and *artificium*, used in Med. Lat. to
 denote an implement, esp. of war. Before invention of gunpowder it was
 41 used for missile weapons in general. . . *gone*, with the bow and arrows. . .
south, in a S. direction from the spot where J. was standing. . . *bowed*.
 J. worthy of respect for his true friendship. . . *kissed*, affection. . . *wept*,
 42 love, gratitude, sorrow. . . *Go peace*, without harm, thy life is saved. . .
forasmuch. Heb. The Lord be witness to that we have sworn, &c. . . *seed*,
 my descendants and thine. . . *city*, Gibeah (=city on a hill). Site not cer-
 tainly identified. Prob. the modern *Tuliel el-Fûl*, 4 m. N. of Jerusalem.
R. B. R. i. 577, 579, and in 1852, 286. *Jamieson's East. Man., Old Test.*
 277. See art. "*Gibeah*" in *S. B. D.* *S. S. P.* 213, 217. *K. D. B. I.*
 iii. 268. *S. J. C.* ii. 58.

An Illustration of Friendship.

In this friendship there are five things to be noticed :—

I. THE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT LED TO IT.

1. *The character of David which developed the friendship of Jonathan.* (a.) He was *brave*. The tent of Saul. Jonathan prob. present. The story of the lion and the bear. The battle with the giant. Jonathan looking on. (b.) He was *clever*. Could play on the harp. Cast with the sling. (c.) He was *honourable*. Did not deny his father when in the midst of royal scenes. Was not boastful. "I am the son of Jesse," &c.
2. *The character of Jonathan which yielded to David's influence* marked by (a.) *Filial love*. Was glad that his father's crown, &c., were saved by David. (b.) By *simplicity*. Was unambitious. Admired the greatness of David's character. (c.) By *piety*. Desired that the will of God might be done.
3. *The providence of God*. All hearts in his hand. He raised up this friend to protect David.

II. THE EVENTS THAT MARKED IT. 1. Exchange of gifts (1 Sa. xviii. 4).

2. Vindication of character. Jonathan defends his absent friend (1 Sa. xix. 4).
3. Deliverance of David. The plot. The banquet. Archery practice (1 Sa. xx. 11—23).
4. Separation (1 Sa. xx. 41, 42).

III. THE QUALITIES THAT DISTINGUISHED IT.

1. *Self-sacrifice*. 2. *Fidelity*. 3. *Religiousness*. 4. *Interchanged covenant promises*. 5. *Commended each other to God*.

IV. THE RESULTS THAT FLOWED FROM IT.

1. *To David and Jonathan, and their relations*. Embalmed the memory of Jonathan. Saved the family of Saul from extirpation. Bore fruit in the future life of Mephibosheth. Was a comfort to Jonathan. David preserved. The nation and the world benefited.
2. *To ourselves*. (a.) The building-up of a beautiful and instructive story. (b.) Chiefly the raising of the family of David into historical importance. Had David remained obscure there might have been a difficulty in tracing the lineage of Jesus.

V. THE LESSONS THAT ARE TAUGHT BY IT.

1. Concerning the choice of friends. The true and the good.
2. Concerning the duties of friends. "He that would have friends must show himself friendly."
3. Concerning the Friend of sinners. He is a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother (*com.* the conduct of Jonathan with that of David's brethren). Like Jonathan, Jesus (a.) gives presents. (b.) Saves from great peril. (c.) Does not change. (d.) Was self-sacrificing. (e.) He pleads our cause before *his* Father. Like David, we should (1.) Return his kindness. (2.) Love his friends and brethren.

B.C. 1061. 1 Sam. xxiv. 1—22.

- 1 *following* (xxiii. 27—29). . . *En-gedi* (=fountain of the kid), anciently called Hazezon-tamar, in wilderness of Judah; ab. mid. of W. shore of Dead S. Lime-stone cliffs full of caves, wild goats, where they are still found on rocks of 'Ain Jidy (2 Ch. xx. 2; Cant. i. 14; Ezek. xlvii. 10).
- 2 *three thousand*, to hunt one man (xxvi. 20). . . *chosen*, fitted for the purpose; reliable, attached to his own person. . . *sheepcotes* (A.S. *côte*, whence cot, cottage: still connected with smaller animals; as dovecote, hencote, &c.). . . *cave*, one of those in the neighbourhood, in which it is still common for the shepherds and their flocks to lodge. . . *cover. feet*, prob. to rest after the march, and before beginning the search of the caves. . . *David*. See titles of Pss. lvii., cxlii. . . *sides*, dark recesses and passages.
- 4 *deliver*, they would have killed Saul. . . *privily*, privately, while prob. Saul
- 5,6 was asleep. . . *smote*, condemned him for doing even that. . . *said*, rebuking their suggestion, and in self-condemnation. . . *anointed*, and there-
- 7 fore, chiefly, he would not injure Saul. . . *stayed*, appeased. . . *Saul*, not
- 8 knowing what was done. . . *lord.king*, token of his loyalty. . . *bowed*,
- 9 and of his humble allegiance. . . *men's words*. David generously assumes that Saul was moved against him by the slanders of others, and not by his
- 10 own evil heart. . . *my hand*, in my power. . . *kill.thee*, which I might
- 11 easily have done. . . *Moreover*, as proof of the truth of my words. . . *I cut off*, with a sword that I might have slain thee with. . . *not.sinned*, as some
- 12 may have said, and you suspect. . . *Lord.avenge*. Defend me (Deut. xxxii.
- 13 25; Ps. xciv. 1; Heb. x. 30; Rom. xii. 19). . . *proverb*, moral maxim. *ancients*, wise men of the past. . . *wickedness*, &c. (Matt. vii. 16—18; xii.
- 14 33, 34; xv. 19). . . *After whom*. Is this expedition against one man, who has done no wrong, worthy of a king, and he the K. of Israel? . . . *dead dog*,
- 15 unworthy thy notice, and harmless. . . *The Lord*. He put himself in
- 16 God's keeping. . . *deliver*. David would not take this work in his own
- 17 hands. . . *thy voice*, thy mind, thy heart; can this be true that thou hast spared me? . . . *my son*, in years, by kingly relation (a K. the father of his people) and by marriage with Michal. . . *wept*. Bad men have compunc-
- 18 tions of remorse. . . *he said*, &c. Evil men have often said good things
- 19 (*ill*. Balaam, Num. xxiii. 10). . . *killedst not*, as any other would have done.
- 20 *enemy*, and especially one so inveterate as himself. . . *go away*, without in-
- 21 jury? . . . *I know*. He saw how David feared God, and that God preserved David. . . *king*, for he had behaved himself kingly. . . *established.hand*, shall be ruled by thee. Notwithstanding all this fair speech, Saul continued to persecute David (xxv. 44; xxvi., xxvii.). . . *Swear*. He knew that such a man as David would keep such a vow, whatever he might do meanwhile. . . *my seed*. This bad man had a father's love for his children. In his blindness he sought to injure the friend of his own son. Thus the wicked oppose the religious, who are the great friends of their children.
- 22 *went home*, to meditate other schemes. . . *gat.hold*. He would rather be in the hands of God in the wilderness than in the hands of Saul in Gibeah.

S. S. P. 144, 147, 295, 509, 510. R. B. R. ii. 203, 209, 211, 214. D. B. N. S. i. 412. S. J. C. ii. 66. K. D. B. I. iii. 272. Jamieson's East. Cust. Old Test. 287.

Persecutor—Defenceless Monarch—Fugitive—Conquered Enemy.

NOTE ON EN-GEDI. The wilderness of E. is doubtless the immediate neighbouring part of the wild region W. of the D. Sea. "On all sides," says Dr Robinson, "the country is full of caverns, which might then serve as lurking-places for David and his men, as they do for outlaws at the present day." He adds that as he came in sight of the ravine of the Ghâr, a mountain-goat started up, and bounded along the face of the rocks on the opp. side. (En-gedi = fountain of the kid.) See 1 Sa. xxiii. 29; xxiv. 1, 2; 2 Ch. xx. 2; S. Song, i. 14; Ezek. xlvii. 10. Here the camphire and vine once flourished. The fountain bursts from the limestone rock at an elevation of 400 ft above the sloping plain (*T. L. B.* 602).

- I. THE RELENTLESS PERSECUTOR. *Saul.* (1.) *Of whom.* David. What had David done? Nothing that merited this hostility. He had conquered Goliath, his enemy's champion. With the magical music of his harp he had composed Saul's mind. He had married Saul's daughter. He had fought in defence of Saul's crown and life. (2.) *How.* He had cruelly resolved to kill David. Would hunt him, and capture him. Took 3000 picked men, the better to accomplish this. Hemmed David in. No escape for him. The Dead Sea behind, Saul and 3000 men in front and around. "Make haste for my help," &c.
- II. THE DEFENCELESS MONARCH. Saul in the cave. Does not know that David is so near. Is doubtless wearied by his march. Enters to "cover his feet." Prob. falls asleep. Perhaps dreams that he has captured David. Lies there perfectly defenceless. Around, in the dark recesses of the cave, are concealed David and his followers. By one stroke of a sword David may relieve himself of his foe, and declare himself king. What can Saul do? *III.* of carnal security of wicked beneath the uplifted sword of eternal justice. Forgiveness of injuries.
- III. THE MAGNANIMOUS FUGITIVE. David. His followers whisper their advice. Let him kill his enemy, and be free. He rebukes them. Steals from his hiding-place with a drawn sword. Bends over the prostrate form of the gigantic king. Had once in that king's behalf stooped over the prostrate and insensible body of that king's enemy; can use the sword now as well as he could then. He who killed Goliath, spares Saul. *III.* many great and powerful enemies of God have been destroyed, but we are spared! Cuts off the skirt of the robe.
- IV. THE CONQUERED ENEMY. Saul comes forth. Part of his robe gone! David comes out of the same cave! He does homage, and, before Saul can slay him, he shows the piece he has cut off. Saul sees how near to death he was. His anger is killed with kindness. He has had a kiss for a blow. He weeps. Is for the time subdued and penitent. Have we been led to repentance by the goodness of God? Like Saul, we have been spared yet a little longer. How much longer we know not.
- LEARN—How wicked our opposition to truth, Providence, Jesus Christ!

B.C. 1060. 1 Sam. xxv. 1—43.

- 1 *Paran* (=region with caverns). In S. of Palestine, near Beersheba and Kadesh, between Egypt and Midian (Gen. xxi. 14—21; Num. xiii. 3, 17;
- 2 1 Ki. xi. 18). . . *Maon*, town in mts of Judah, S.E. of Hebron (Jos. xv. 55; 1 Sam. xxv. 2), ruins, now called *Ma'in*. . . *possessions*, business. . . *Carmel* (=garden, park). This Carmel was in the hill country of Judah (1 Sam. xv. 12; xxvii. 3; 2 Ch. xxvi. 10). . . *great*, rich, powerful. . .
- 3 *shearing* (less. 27). . . *Nabal* (=foolish). How many rich deserve the name! (Lu. xii. 20.) . . *Abigail* (=father rejoiceth). . . *churlish* (the A.S. *ceorl* meant simply a rustic). The ancient rudeness of rustics has gotten for churl the sig. of rude, &c. . . of *Caleb*, i. e. a Calebite. Caleb=dog. This N.
- 4 was a doggish man (LXX.). . . *heard*. So important a work of so great a man
- 5 would be much talked of. . . *ten*, sufficient to bring provender for the rest.
- 6,7 *Peace*, a thing a rich man might desire and not get. . . *shearers*: and therefore a great feast. . . *hurt*. *missing*. Such an orderly band as David's
- 8 followers a strange thing at that time. . . *young men*, the ten. . . *good day*, of much rejoicing and accustomed hospitality. . . *cometh*. *hand*, nearest at
- 9,10 hand, without selection. . . *ceased*, waited for an answer. . . *answered*, in a way that *ill*. his name. . . *master*. David's was God, to whom N.
- 11 was unfaithful. . . *whence*. It was enough that they were men, and in need.
- 12,13 *turned*, &c., empty-handed. . . *four hundred*: for though N. had many servants, David would show that he was not to be trifled with. . . *stuff*,
- 14,15 tents, baggage, &c. . . *railed*, Heb. flew upon. . . *conversant* (Lat. *conversor*=to dwell with). Whence the Bible use of conversation, &c. Man-
- 16 ner of life. . . *wall*, protection from wild beasts and robbers. . . *son*. *Belial*
- 18 =worthless, vile. (B.=good-for-nothing.) . . *two hundred loaves*, thin and light cakes. . . *bottles*, of goat-skin (whence Matt. ix. 17). . . *cakes*. *figs*,
- 19 figs dried, and pressed together. . . *before*, to announce me. . . *told not*,
- 20,23 for he would have prevented. . . *against*, opposite to. . . *bowed*, respect-
- 24,25 ful salutation. . . *audience*, Heb. ears. . . *not*. *regard*, lay this folly to
- 26,27 his charge. . . *withholden thee*, by sending me. . . *blessing*, present. . .
- 28 *trespass*, i. e. of her husband, which she had taken upon herself. . . *sure house*. She had evidently heard much of the history and fame of David.
- 29 *man*. *pursue*, Saul. . . *bound*. *bundle*. *Ill*. things of value were tied together.
- 30 *sling*, i. e. not so tied up, but hurled away. . . *he*. *spoken*. She had heard of the words of Samuel. . . *ruler*. She believed he would be the king. . .
- 31 *grief*, stumbling. She suggests that an injury done to Nabal might be regarded as the act of one who might oppress; rich and influential men
- 32 might be his enemies. . . *Blessed*. David recognizes the hand of God in
- 33,36 this. . . *advice*, a thing that men are not always willing to heed. . . *drunken*. Drunkards, selfish. That such are open-handed, a mistake. . . *no-*
- 37 *thing*. Unable to understand, he might vent his brutal rage on her. . . *heart died*, with terror at the danger he had barely escaped, or anger at the pre-
- 38 sent she had made. . . *Lord smote*. Better than if David had done so. . .
- 39 *from evil*. Divine restraints should be subjects of praise. . . *wife*. Michal
- 40 had been forcibly divorced, and prob. D. had heard of it. . . *servants*, &c.
- 41 Thus marriages were negotiated (less. 21). . . *wash*. *feet*, kindness to the
- 42 servants, a token of her acceptance of David. . . *became*. *wife*, which marriage brought D. much wealth, and many servants, &c., and made a queen
- 43 of Abigail. . . *Ahinoam* (=brother of pleasantness). . . *Jezreel* (less. 88). *both*. *wives*. Mosaic legislation checked, but did not forbid, polygamy.

R. B. R. ii. 193, 196—201, 466. S. S. P. 100, 101, 485, 490.

The Helpless Wanderer—the Churlish Farmer—the Prudent Peacemaker.

- I. THE HELPLESS WANDERER. *David*. (1.) Had recently lost a great and dear friend—Samuel. (2.) Had had sad experience of the enmity of Saul. Could not trust himself near the king, notwithstanding S.'s recent professions of repentance, and the promises he had made. (3.) Went with 600 men into the wilderness of Paran. A work to be done there. Not only to guard his own life, but protect the property of others. Many robbers there. Wandering and rapacious Arabs, who lived not by work, but by plunder. But his men must live. Might have become a band of plundering robbers themselves. Earned their bread by protecting others. (A lesson for us: none so unfortunate but they may be helpers of others.) David, a true king of men. He restrained his men in the cave (less. 98), and now in the wilderness. His great administrative ability! Sends to Nabal for what he has honestly earned, and might forcibly have taken. Sends sufficient men to bring enough, but too few for purpose of intimidation.
- II. THE CHURLISH FARMER. *Nabal*. (1.) He was very rich. Had large flocks, &c. Would not have been so well off had it not been for David. D. had protected his flocks and his servants. (2.) It was a joyous time. An important rural festival. At such a time most people would be disposed to generous hospitality. (3.) At such a time this rich Nabal receives visitors. Ten young men. They represent his protectors. But for them he would not have had so many sheep to shear. They want food. (4.) His churlish answer. "A soft answer turneth away wrath." Nabal being rich, and having many servants, imagined that he ran no risk. He would do as he pleased. (5.) His imminent danger. David gathers his men and proceeds to chastise the rich, rude, ungrateful Nabal.
- III. THE PRUDENT PEACEMAKER. *Abigail*. (1.) She is very beautiful. (2.) Is also very sensible. Beauty and sensibility not always combined in one person. Her character more beautiful than her person. (3.) She has heard of David and his men who had protected her husband's property. She evidently knew much about David. Had heard of his wonderful history. The anointing, &c., &c. (4.) Now she is told of her husband's churlishness, and foreseeing the consequences, resolves to go in person to pacify David. (5.) Thus she not only saves her husband, but preserves David from a great sin. (6.) Abigail, on the death of Nabal, becomes the wife of David.

LEARN—

- I. Whatever our position, there may be some one we can help.
- II. No excuse can be offered for churlishness.
- III. Rejoice not only that some sins are forgiven, but that others have been prevented.

B.C. 1056. 1 Sam. xxviii. 3—25.

- 3 *Samuel dead*: and the only medium of Divine communication lost to the king and people. . . *lamented*, as well they might. . . *Ramah* (less. 87, 95). . . *put away*, slain or banished (Ex. xxii. 18; Lev. xix. 31; xx. 6, 7). . . *familiar* (*C. D. N. T.* 225, 237), Heb. *ôb*=a bottle. The spirit was supposed to be in the body of the diviner as if in a bottle (hence bottle-imp?). The answers, supposed to be from such spirit, prob. produced by ventriloquism. See "out of the ground," Is. xxix. 4. . . *wizards*. Heb.
- 4 word=*wise, knowing*. . . *Shunem*, now *Sulam*, on W. slope of Little Hermon (Jos. xix. 18; 2 Ki. iv. 8). . . *Gilboa* (=bubbling fountain), E. of
- 5 plain of Esdraelon. . . *afraid*. "This conscience doth make cowards of us
- 6 all." . . *dreams*, for which he had prayed. . . *Urim* (=light. Lev. viii. 8; Num. xxvii. 21; Deut. xxxiii. 8). Meaning veiled in mystery. [Was it a brilliant crystal, amongst the gems of the high priest's breast-plate, in which was granted a shadowy reflection of future events? Is fortune-telling by crystals a corrupt derivation of this?] . . . *prophets*, of whom we
- 7 know not the names of true ones. . . *woman*, one who had escaped (*v.* 1). *Endor* (=fount of the dwelling), 4 m. from Tabor; and 8 from Gilboa (*T.*
- 8 *L. B.* 445). . . *disguised*, (1.) fear, (2.) shame, (3.) lest having destroyed such, this one should regard him as a spy. . . *two men*, to guide and guard.
- 9 *night* (Jo. iii. 19). Fit time for a dark deed, and in which to serve the
- 9 prince of darkness. To escape observation and detection. . . *knowest*: and she knew, yet practised her art by stealth. . . *snare*. She feared he was
- 10 informer. Should not her art have taught her better? . . . *no punishment*. One capable of making good such a promise must be a person of influence:
- 11 she might guess whom? . . . *Samuel*, whom had he heeded more when living
- 12 he had not needed now. . . *saw*. It does not appear that Saul saw anything; and her seeing was mere pretence. . . *loud voice*, in pretended fear.
- 13 *deceived*. She was also deceiving. . . *thou. Saul*. Which, from height, manner, &c., she had been all along assured of. His naming Samuel would
- 13 remove all doubt. . . *what sawest thou?* Evidently therefore Saul saw nothing. He inquires the reason of her fear. Had he seen he would have feared.
- 14 *saw gods*. A falsehood. Designed to fill the mind of Saul with awe, and
- 14 to gain time. . . *What form*. If he saw, why ask? It is not certain that Saul was even in the same apartment with the witch. . . *old man*. All Israel knew that Sam. at his death was very aged. . . *mantle*, common
- 15 dress. . . *perceived*, understood. . . *stooped. bowed*, in great fear. . . *Samuel said*, or rather the witch imitating an old man's voice, with ventriloquial effect. . . *why*. Sam. himself would have known; especially as he seems
- 16 to have known the future (*v.* 19). . . *Wherefore*. A shrewd thought of the witch. Was it likely Sam. would do what the Lord was unwilling should
- 17 be done? . . . *David*, whose anointing and fame had been rumoured abroad.
- 18, 19 *this thing*. So far Saul is only told what he knew. . . *with me*. Easy to predict, as being the most likely thing to happen. Saul surrounded by enemies, a battle imminent. He was not likely to survive defeat. The effect
- 20 produced on Saul's mind may have aided fulfilment. . . *eaten bread*. This,
- 21 with excitement, may account for the success of the deception. . . *came. Saul*. He was some distance off, or in another room. . . *Behold, &c.* She still
- 22 keeps up the deception. . . *Now therefore, &c.* Having risked her life,
- 23 she is anxious to please. . . *compelled*, by repeated solicitations. . . *bed*, or
- 24 couch, on which, exhausted and excited, he had cast himself. . . *hasted*, day
- 25 coming, Saul ill, and anxious to depart. . . *night*, one of the darkest of his dark life.

 Man forsaken of God—Man deceived by the devil.

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES.—On *Urim* see *Trench on Seven Churches*, 124—127. As to queries in note on *v. 6*, it may be remembered that crystallogmancy (whence (?) hydromancy) was once very popular; and like many modern and corrupt practices, may have been derived from something more ancient and true. What true thing has not been counterfeited? (See also art. "*Urim*" in *K. E. B. L.*, *S. B. D.*, *T. B. N.*)—On *the witch of Endor*. It is assumed in the *notes* that the whole case was one of gross deception. That *S.* tried to deceive her, she succeeded in deceiving him. In support of this theory, which is not new, it is to be noted:—(1.) That there is good reason to believe that the witch knew *S.* (2.) That as the former enemy of her craft, she bore him no good-will. (3.) That since only the superstitious and timid would resort to her, there was in this case an opportunity of working on a mind so moved; as well as of retaliating on an enemy. (4.) With the success of the Philistines, which she regarded as certain, there would be the revival of her art. (5.) Having refused to speak with *S.* by dream, *Urim*, or prophet, it is hardly likely that God would do so by the spirit of Samuel. (6.) If having cast *S.* off, *God* would not speak to him, and by such means; it is still more difficult to believe that this was accomplished by some diabolical power. (7.) It is very evident that *S.* did not see anything; and probable that he was in another part of the witch's house or cave. (8.) After all, nothing was told to *S.* beyond what his own conscience (*vv.* 16—18) felt, and his fears (*v.* 19) apprehended, and nothing but what the witch might utter. The physical and mental state of *S.* must also be taken into account as facilitating deception.

I. MAN FORSAKEN OF GOD. No state more helpless. God refusing to hear or speak. *S.* brought this upon himself by sin (*xiii.* 9—14). He had tried to deceive Samuel (*xv.* 9, 14, 15). Now the prophets were silent. We have them speaking to us. By our disobedience these lively oracles may be as dead words. What then? Like *S.*, have no safe guide, be the subject of fear, and become superstitious believers in omens and the like. Prayerfully reflect upon 2 Thess. ii. 8—12. Does not this seem to be the awful state of some, who, having abandoned the Bible, and now left to themselves, are believers in lies? (*ill.* spirit-rapping, Mormonism, and other horrible delusions).

II. MAN DECEIVED BY THE DEVIL. A liar from the beginning. Father of lies. Father of those who practice lying arts, and lay in wait to deceive. The prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. His great object the eternal ruin of the soul. This he may effect by leading men, through their fears, onward to destruction. *S.* a picture of what all men would be without a Divine revelation, and of what a man may become who neglects that revelation.

LEARN—I. If we believe not Moses and the prophets, &c. (*Lu.* xvi. 29—31; *xxiv.* 25; *Jo.* v. 39; 2 *Pet.* i. 19).

II. If we walk by the Bible, we shall need no other guide.

B.C. 1056. 1 Sam. xxxi. 1—13.

- 1 *Philistines*. Origin of this famous people uncertain. Some are of opinion they were descended from Shem, and migrated from Crete to Palestine; perh. passing through Egypt. Diff. to reconcile this with Scripture. Acc. to Gen. x. 13, 14, they were of Ham, through Mizraim (see also Deut. ii. 23; Jer. xlvii. 4; Am. ix. 7). Others, who accept this view, regard the P. as a branch of the Rephaim. They were in "the S. country" in time of Abraham (Gen. xx.; *com.* Gen. xxi. 22, 23; xxvi. 12—33). By time of Joshua they had increased into a nation; and thence of all the occupants of Canaan offered the stoutest and longest resistance to the Hebrews. . . *Israel*, in this case not the "prevailer." . . *slain*, Heb. wounded. . . *Gilboa* (= bubbling fountain), mt. range on E. of the plain of Esdraelon, opp. Jezreel. This range, 10 m. long, is now called Jebel Fukûlah. 500 to 600 ft high above the plain (*T. L. B.* 462). . . *Abinadab* (=noble father), (1 Ch. viii. 33; ix. 39; x. 2). . . *Melchishua* (=king of help), (1 Sam. xiv. 49). . . *archers*. The bow one of most ancient and important of weapons. Made sometimes of steel or brass (Ps. xviii. 34). Arrows kept in a quiver (Gen. xxvii. 3; Ps. cxxvii. 5; Is. xxii. 6); sharpened (Is. xlix. 2); barbed (Ps. xxxviii. 2); poisoned (Job vi. 4), tipped with fire (Ps. cxx. 4, and hence Eph. vi. 16). . . *sore*
 - 4 (*A.S. sár, swær*), *lit.* heavy. . . *thrust through*. He saw he could not escape. . . *abuse*. Spoil of armour, strip, behead, or otherwise mutilate his body. . . *afraid*. Regarded S. as the anointed of God. . . *fell*, &c. Fulfilled
 - 5 the witch's prediction (less. 100), by committing suicide. . . *died him*.
 - 6 Ill-fated, foolish constancy. . . *same day*, one of the saddest days in
 - 7 Jewish history. . . *saw*, understood from report. . . *valley*, of Jezreel. . . *other side Jordan*, on E. side of J. . . *saw fled*, they would fly eastward and S.E. from the Philistines, whose invasion came from the W. and S.W. *cities*, places most likely to be first attacked by a conquering army. . .
 - 8 *dwelt them*. And so made good their conquest. . . *strip, slain*. A common practice in ancient warfare, not only of the crowd of sutlers following an army, but of the soldiers themselves. Armour and weapons being of great value. . . *found sons*. A great prize, as it assured them that Israel had
 - 9 lost its king. . . *cut head*, a thing that Saul had dreaded. . . *armour*, which would be worth much, and valuable as a trophy. . . *publish idols*. There would be a public thanksgiving and rejoicing. . . *house, temple*. . .
 - 10 *Astaroth* (=images of Astarte), a chief place in dominions of Og (Jos. ix. 10; xii. 4; xiii. 12, 31). Here Saul's armour would be seen by great multitudes who would feel that Goliath was avenged. . . *Beth-shan* (=house of quiet). Afterwards Scythopolis, and now *Beisán*, sit. at E.
 - 11 end of p. of Esdraelon near Jordan (*T. L. B.* 453). . . *Jabesh-gilead*, on a
 - 12 mt E. of Jordan (see 1 Sam. xi. 1—11). The people now requite this old kindness. . . *all night*, for secrecy and safety (1 Ch. x. 11). David acknowledged the act (2 Sam. ii. 4—6), but afterwards removed the calcined remains to Kish (xxi. 12—14). . . *burnt*. Not customary to do this: but in this case utterly to prevent them from falling again into the
 - 13 Philistines' hands. . . *a tree*. Where their presence would be least likely to be suspected, should search be made. Caves and sepulchres would be rifled. . . *fasted*, in token of their great sorrow.
- K. D. B. I.* iii. 303. *R. B. R.* iii. 157, 170. *T. L. B.* (*Esdraelon*), 465, 477, 479, 480; (*Gilboa*), 452, 462; (*Jabesh-gilead*), 455; (*Beth-shan*), 453—456. *S. S. P.* 336—342. *S. J. C.* ii. 30.

The Defeat—Despair—and Death of King Saul.

NOTE ON MTS OF GILBOA. A range on E. of plain of Esdraelon, opp. Jezreel. Now called *Jebel Fūkûah*. About 10 m. long. Height only about 500—600 ft above plain, or, acc. to some, 2200 or 1200 above the sea. A small village, *Jelbôu*, still on top of mt. On a lofty promontory, called *el-Mazar*, Dr Thompson thinks that Saul and his sons fell; the name, = a sacred tomb, to which pilgrimages are made, being given to it, because the daughters of Israel went there to weep for S. (*T. L. B.* 462). Half a mile E. of the range is the large spring of Jezreel, or Harod (*Jud.* vii. 1), now called *Ain Jâlûd*, whence prob. the name Gilboa, which = "bubbling fountain." "Bleak and bare. The soil scanty, and the grey limestone rocks crop out in jagged cliffs and naked crowns, giving the whole a look of painful barrenness." (*Com.* 2 Sa. i. 21.)

- I. DEFEAT OF SAUL. (1.) *By whom*. The Philistines. A warlike and terrible race. Old enemies of Israel. Idolaters, proud, defiant, boastful. Had been often conquered. Now they are victors. *III.* the superior power of evil over a man who is cast off by God. Man not able of *himself*, whatever his resources, title, &c., &c., to contend successfully against the prince of this world. Saul had once defeated these very Philistines. David, with small human help, often worsted them. Took their cities even. (2.) *Where*. Plain of Esdraelon. Great battle-ground of Palestine. Very lovely and fruitful. Many of the loveliest spots in the world associated with war. Sin, in various forms, mars the beauty of earth. It pollutes home, sabbath, sanctuary, &c.
- II. DESPAIR OF SAUL. (1.) *His army routed*. His trust gone; his troops have melted away. (2.) *His three sons slain*. He looks over the field of conflict, the scene of the battle, from heights of Gilboa. (3.) *God has forsaken him*. That "present help" is absent from him. (4.) *The witch's prophecy*. Thinks it must be fulfilled. Believes the Philistines will find him, capture or kill him. (5.) *There is none to deliver*. David might have been there to help. But he has persecuted his only true friend. Terrible picture of ruin.
- III. DEATH OF SAUL. (1.) *Sad views*. An ill life behind. A dreary prospect around. Enemies struggling up the hill. Heaps of slain. Three dead sons. Nothing but darkness in the future. (2.) *A violent death*. Not peacefully gathered to his fathers with his family round him. (3.) *By his own hand*. This the worst feature. No repentance. Too proud to acknowledge his errors and seek amendment. He dies.

"O Saul!
How ghastly didst thou look, on thine own sword
Expiring, in Gilboa, from that hour
Ne'er visited with rain from heaven, or dew."—(*Dante*, *Purg.* xii. 35.)

LEARN—

- I. How weak is the strongest without God !
- II. How terrible is disaster without hope !
- III. How fearful is death without repentance !

B.C. 1056. 2 Sam. ii. 1—11.

- 1 *after this*, i. e. the victory by the Philistines, and their occupation of the cities of the Hebrews (1 Sam. xxxi. 7). . . *enquired*, by prayer, or by Urim. See 1 Sam. xxiii. 6, 9; xxx. 7, 8. . . *cities*, that are unoccupied by the foe. . . *Lord said*, by a vision, or by a deep impression on the mind of David, or by Urim. See less. 100. . . *of Judah*. The Philistines seem not, at this time, to have penetrated so far south. . . *Whither*. He would not take his own choice, but leave God to direct his steps. . . *Hebron* (=alliance, less. 12, 20). Probably the most important city of south Palestine at this
- 2,3 time. . . *two wives* (1 Sam. xxv. 43; less. 99). . . *his men*, who were devoted to his person and cause; with the old servants of Nabal, a considerable number, well ordered, and the nucleus of his future army. . . *household*. They would defend Hebron the more earnestly as having to guard their homes. . . *of Hebron*. The district taking its name from the chief city. . .
- 4 *men*. *Judah*, not of Hebron only. . . *they*, some priests there. . . *anointed*, privately. He had been a. before, but more privately (less. 95). . . *buried*
- 5 *Saul* (less. 101), and therefore plainly opposed to the Philistines. . . *sent*. Magnanimity; and a stroke of sound policy. A people who had shown such devotion to the house of Saul might be apprehensive of no great friendship from one who had suffered so much from Saul. By thus sending such apprehension would be removed. David would make common cause with them, a common foe. He could admire people who were faithful
- 6 to S. at such a time. . . *Lord shew*, &c. D. knew that the Lord loved the merciful. . . *I. requite*. To their surprise, perhaps, he would regard their
- 7 act as a kindness to himself. . . *hands strengthened*. Be encouraged. Firmly resolve to be free. *Hold* firmly to this attachment to Saul. . . *Saul, dead*: you are therefore liberated from fealty to him. . . *me king*.
- 8 A hint that they should. . . *But*, another diplomatist also had his eye on these faithful men. . . *Abner* (1 Sam. xiv. 50; xvii. 55; xxvi. 14). . . *Ner*, father of Kish, Saul's father. . . *captain*, and much attached to Saul. . . *Ish-bosheth* (=bashful, iii. 7, 8; iv. 5, 6; 1 Ch. viii. 33; ix. 39), prob. youngest s. of Saul, called Esh-baal. . . *Mahanaim* (=camps, less. 27), E. of Jordan, N. of Jabbok. David's head-quarters during Absalom's rebellion (xvii. 24; xix. 39; 1 Ki. ii. 8), prob. now *Mahnah*.
- 9 *Gilead*, a district near Mahanaim (less. 27, 33, 80, 88). . . *Ashurites*. Some think the Geshurites are meant; but they were independent in the time of David (iii. 3; xiii. 37, 38). Prob. they were Asherites, i. e. of Asher. . . *Jezreel* (less. 88). . . *all Israel*, i. e. nearly all the Holy Land N. of Judah, on both sides Jordan. With the Philistines on the S. and W.
- 10 and in cities of N., the position of David was very critical. . . *forty years old*, in the prime of life, but inactive. . . *two years*. He was killed at last by two of his officers, who hoped to win David's favour. See how D. rewarded them (iii. 4). Abner had some time before deserted him on being
- 11 affronted. . . *house*. *Judah*, and that tribe alone. . . *seven years*. *six months*. During this time consolidating his power; and watching patiently his opportunity, which was furnished when the revolt of Abner had disheartened the Israelites

R. B. R. (*Hebron*), i. 315; ii. 430—462; (*Mahanaim*), app. 166; (*Gilead*), i. 349; iii. 243. S. S. P. (*Gilead*), 322; (*Hebron*), 164; (*Mahanaim*), 328. T. L. B. (*Hebron*), 577—601. K. D. B. I. iii. 308. S. J. C. ii. 77.

A Devout Inquiry—a Gracious Answer—a Joyful Proclamation.

NOTE ON HEBRON. Town in S. of Palestine, 18 m. S. of Jerusalem. Very ancient. Built before Zoan, named before Damascus (Num. xiii. 22; Gen. xiii. 18; xv. 2). Old name Kirjath-arba = city of Arba (Gen. xxiii. 2; Jos. xiv. 15; xv. 13; xxi. 11; Jud. i. 10). Prob. also it = Mamre (Gen. xxiii. 19; xxxv. 27; xiv. 13, 28). Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, dwelt in H., and were buried here (Gen. xxxvii. 14; xlv. 1). See des. of tomb in *S. J. C.* i. 448; after the Conquest it was given to Caleb (Jos. x. 36, 37; xiv. 6—15; xv. 13, 14; Jud. i. 20). Afterwards a city of refuge (Jos. xx. 7; xxi. 11—13; less. 78). Not named by prophets, nor in N. T. Now called *el-Khulil*. Pop. ab. 8000. 700 Jews. No Christians. Glass manufactories. Two old pools or reservoirs: *lower*, 133 ft sq., 22 ft deep; *upper*, 85 by 55 ft 19 ft. deep (*T. L. B.* 583). A mile up the valley is a vast oak tree, *popularly said* to be the tree of Mamre where Abraham pitched his tent.

- I. A DEVOUT INQUIRY. (1.) David, hearing of Saul's defeat and death, sought direction of God. With many followers of his own, increased by the servants of Nabal (whose widow he had married), and by fugitives probably from the army of Saul; many in such circumstances would have taken action without asking. Some so rich as David would have preferred a quiet life to the risks &c., of war. (2.) His inquiry shows him willing to work out the will of God. Into cities? That is, make a bold stand against the enemies of Judah? He knew what God would have done, yet desired to know if *this* were the time, and if *he* were the man. Would take nothing upon himself.
- II. A GRACIOUS ANSWER. (1.) Implies selection of the man. *Go!* Thou, David. In his political relations as the successor of Saul, a man after God's own heart. Saul, the people's choice, a man of stature, &c. David, God's choice, a man of right thoughts towards God. (2.) Selection of place. Hebron. Ancient historical associations. Such a place as all Israel would struggle for. Tomb of the patriarchs. It was the stronger for the people's attachment to it.
- III. A JOYFUL PROCLAMATION. (1.) David proclaimed king. At a time when the hopes of the people were much downcast. Their cities abandoned to lawless and godless foes. (2.) The man proclaimed was one whose name was already famous. The conqueror of Goliath, &c. (3.) He was proclaimed at Hebron. His presence in the old city a pledge to them that he would be the restorer of the nation, and of religion. (4.) Confidence restored in the south. The people returned to the cities. David set the example by bringing his property thither.

LEARN—

- I. Commit thy way to the Lord, he will bring it to pass.
- II. Follow the guidance of Providence.
- III. Rejoice in the kingship of Jesus.

B.C. 1042. 2 Sam. vi. 1—16.

- 1 *Again*, after the successes and progress of David just recorded. . . *chosen*,
- 2 leading and influential. . . *arose*, made ready (1 Ch. xiii. 1—8). . . *Baale of Judah* (=citizens of Judah), name (1 Ch. xiii. 6) of Kirjath-jearim, now called *Kurriel el'-Aineb*. Dr Thompson believes it to be same as Emmaus (*I. B.* 534). . . *ark. God*, which, after being delivered up by the Philistines, was at length placed here (1 Sam. v., vi., vii. 1, 2). Here it remained, though occasionally brought out (xiv. 18). . . *dwelleth. cherubims*. This be-
- 3 cause of the Shekinah, that rested there. . . *cart*, a covered waggon (1 Sa. vi. 1—9). This a hasty and careless act; the violation of an express command (Num. iv. 14, 15; vii. 9; xviii. 3). . . *Abinadab* (=father of nobleness), at whose house on the hill the ark had rested for 70 years (*K. D.*). *Gibeah* (=the hill). Several towns of this name, but here the word = *hill*; and we should read, "hill of Kirjath-jearim." . . *Uzzah* (strength). . . *Ahio*
- 4 (brotherly). . . *sons*, or grandsons. . . *went before*, to guide the oxen that
- 5 drew it. . . *David*, full of joy and gladness at the thing he was undertaking. *played*, the king. Would associate the art that he most loved with the service of God. The best of all that men love best should be thus dedi-
- 6 cated. . . *instruments* (less. 27). . . *Nachon* (prepared), called the floor of Chidon (1 Ch. xiii. 9). Perhaps one word the name of the place, and the other of the proprietor. . . *Uzzah*, who was prob. walking by the side of the waggon. . . *put. hand*. His intention was good, but the act was wrong. Indeed there seems all through to be a strange neglect of the proper and prescribed form. . . *took hold*, which even the priests might not do. . . *oxen*, used in the East, and then for draught, as horses by us now. . . *shook*. Cart
- 7 of rude construction. No springs, roads rough. . . *error*, rashness. . . *died*. This may seem a severe punishment for such an offence. If we understood more perfectly the spirit of those times, and of even the best men in them,
- 8 we should doubtless see that this was right. . . *displeased*, afraid, troubled.
- 9 *made. breach*, Heb. broken. . . *Perez* = breach. . . *afraid*. The Philistines had suffered because of the ark, and now Uzzah: his turn might come. . .
- 10 *city. David*, i. e. Zion (*v.* 7). He feared, but this was his infirmity, and not his humility (*Trapp*), that other disasters would happen. . . *Obed-edom* (serving Edom), a Levite of the Korahites, fr. Kohath (Ex. vi. 21; xviii. 16, with 1 Ch. xxvi. 4), and belonged to class of Levitical doorkeepers, whose duty with others it was to guard the ark (1 Ch. xv. 18, 24). . . *Gittite*, or Gathite, so called from his birthplace, the Levitical city of *Gath-rimmon*, in tribe of Dan (*K. D.*), (Jos. xxi. 24; xix. 45). . . *three months*,
- 12 yet in so short time it became the means of much blessing. . . *David*, thus assured that the source of disaster was not the ark, but men's sin. . . *gladness*, hoping that it would be a blessing to the whole house of Israel. . .
- 13 *they. bare*. He strictly adhered to the proper mode (*com.* 1 Ch. xv.). . . *six paces*. No indecent haste. . . *sacrificed*. His conduct was now ani-
- 14 mated by a religious spirit (1 Ch. xv. 26). . . *danced*, mode of expressing holy joy (Ex. xv. 20; Ps. xxx. 11; cxlix. 3). . . *linen* (1 Ch. xv. 27). . .
- 15,16 *all. house*. Represented by the chief men (1 Ch. xv. 25). . . *Michal*, who, with the rest of the survivors of the h. of Saul, had been treated with merciful consideration by D. . . *Saul's daughter*, so called, and not "the wife of D.," because she manifested her father's disposition rather than her husband's.

Uzzah—Obed-edom—David—Michal.

NOTE ON THE BRINGING UP OF THE ARK. "It was the greatest day of David's life. Its significance in his career is marked by his own pre-eminent position. Conqueror, poet, musician, priest, in one. The sacrifices were offered by him; the benediction both on his people and on his household were pronounced by him. He was the presiding spirit of the whole scene. . . It was felt to be a turning-point in the history of the nation. It recalled even the great epoch of the passage through the wilderness. It awoke again the inspiring strains of the heroic career (Ps. lxxviii. 7—9; *com.* Jud. v. 4) of the Judges. . . As the ark stood beneath the walls of the ancient Jewish fortress. 'Lift up your heads,' &c. . . David was on that day, the founder, not of freedom only, but of empire; not of religion only, but of a Church and commonwealth" (*S. J. C.* ii. 85—87).

- I. UZZAH. (1.) *Not a Levite*; and only such should have undertaken this duty. Probably those who set the ark in the cart were of the priestly order, or they would have been smitten. Or God then spared unfit men to show he approved of the removal. God would not have it slighted on the way, lest its treatment at the end should be deficient in reverence. (2.) *Well-meaning, but thoughtless*. "A type of all who, with good intentions, humanly speaking, yet with unsanctified minds, interfere in the affairs of the kingdom of God, from the notion that they are in danger, and with the hope of saving them." We need not fear, since we are invited to come with boldness to the throne of grace (*com.* Heb. xii. 18—29).
- II. OBED-EDOM. (1.) Of *Levitical* descent. (2.) *How he was blessed*. (a.) *Directly*. For his *faith*. He knew wherefore Uzzah was slain. For his *courage*. He did not decline to receive it on account of that event which had "displeased" even David. God specially rewarded his courage and faith. (b.) *Indirectly*. As the reverence, and conscientiousness, with which he received and regarded it, would produce their fruit in his life. Its presence would lead to conversations and prayer with his children, and these would be a blessing to them. He would live as in the presence of God. Godliness profitable unto all things.
- III. DAVID. Commences his reign by a public profession of that religion, which he long professed more privately. Would have his capital to be head-quarters of the ecclesiastical system. Prepares to bring up the ark. In his eagerness he omits the proper method. Consequent failure of the first attempt. The King of kings taught K. David a lesson. Even he—though a king—must not be too bold. The second attempt, rightly conducted, succeeds. Great joy of king and people.
- IV. MICHAL. Her post of observation. Window of palace. Her want of sympathy. Many religious exercises and undertakings may be despised by godless people. Sunday schools, missions, &c., may be regarded with contempt by some, yet are they right and good notwithstanding.

B.C. cir. 1040. 2 Sam. ix. 1—13.

- 1 *Is.yet.* He inquired. Men of even charitable disposition usually wait to be appealed to. . . *house.Saul*, whence had received great unkindness. Saul had sought his life; Ish-bosheth had set up a rival kingdom; Michal had recently scorned his religious joy. Only Jonathan had acted well. . . *shew.kindness.* Godlike. And would keep his word (1 Sam. xx. 15; xxiv. 21). . . *Jonathan's sake.* The seeds of friendship sown by J. now produced fruit. . . *servant*, one that had survived to this time and through many changes. . . *Ziba* (statue), a Gadite (1 Ch. v. 13). He afterwards repaid this kindness of D. (2 Sam. xvi. 1—4), but for a selfish end, and D. rewarded him (xix. 17, 24—30). . . *kindness.God.* Kindness in the highest degree. . . *lame*, and therefore the more to be pitied. D. could hope for no practical return of kindness from one so hopelessly infirm. . . *Ma-chir* (sold), (2 Sam. xvii. 27). . . *Ammiel* (servant of God). . . *Lo-debar* (no pasture). A town E. of Jordan nr to Mahanaim (xvii. 27). . . *sent.fetched*, did not summon him, but kindly brought him. . . *fell.reverence*, hoping, yet against hope. . . *thy servant*, so low had fallen the great house of Saul. . . *Fear not.* D. saw that M. was anxious about the issue of this interview, and wished to reassure him. . . *Jonathan*, from whom M. may have often heard of D., and whose likeness perhaps he wore. . . *thy father*, and my dear friend. Great men, when exalted, to not forget the friends of the old and adverse time. . . *all.land*, the patrimonial estate. . . *my table*, be my guest. I once feared to eat bread at Saul's table (xx. 5). . . *continually*, and not upon occasions only. . . *bowed*, astonished at such display of kindness. . . *what.* Perhaps thinking, that because so unusual, there was some concealed object sought. . . *dead dog.* Can hurt nor benefit no one. I cannot injure you, if you are not kind; nor repay you, if you are. . . *Ziba*, whose name henceforth often appears in the history, and whose character deserves study as a strange mixture of craft and fidelity and selfishness. . . *said*, calling him to witness, and appointing him to execute this his decree. . . *master's son.* D. reminds Z. that for his old master's sake he must faithfully discharge his present trust. . . *all.pertained.* None would know as well as Z. what the *all* was. Mephibosheth himself would necessarily be ignorant of these things. Z. was probably
- 10 an aged man. . . *Thou.sons.servants.* As steward of the estate, he was to hire servants, and he was now a man of some substance. . . *my table.* I as his father's friend, and you as his father's servant, will take care of M. . . *fifteen sons.* He could not have been a very young man, and at his time of life especially should have laid deceit on one side (but see 1 Sam. xvi. 1—4; and com. Z. with Barzillai, xix. 31—39). . . *twenty servants*, and therefore could not have been a very poor man. . . *said Ziba.* He professes to cheerfully undertake the task, and perhaps at the time meant well. . . *eat.table.* The time was to come when D. would reap the reward of this kindness, and eat of provisions from the estate secured for M.
- 12 *young son* (1 Ch. viii. 34, 35; ix. 40, 41). Let us hope that this *young* and only son was a comfort to his lame father (Prov. x. 1). . . *all dwelt*, children and servants. . . *house*, which would be prob. on Mephibosheth's estate.
- 13 *dwelt.Jerusalem*, and not on his estate, for two reasons: (1.) As the guest of king David; and (2.) Because of his lameness he required attention.

S. J. C. ii. 32, 35, 120, 128. K. D. in loc. S. S. P. (Lo-debar), 486, *note.*
Jamieson's East. Cust., Old Test. 300. K. D. B. I. iii. 376, 381.

The Crafty Servant—the Unfortunate Prince—the Magnanimous King.

- I. THE CRAFTY SERVANT. *Ziba*. (1.) *Fidelity*. Had been servant of Saul, most likely of Jonathan also, now of Mephibosheth. Faithful to the house during its falling fortunes. The more commendable in that, being a man of substance, he did not need help, and might now have to render it. Yet he does not appear to have lived with Mephibosheth in his adversity. He only knew where he dwelt. (2.) *Craft*. (See 2 Sam. xvi. 1—4.) Knew that David needed help, and made him a timely present. Thus secured the gratitude of the king. Told him an untruth, in hope of inflaming David's indignation against Mephibosheth. It is evident that he expected a reward. He obtains one. His case illustrates that of men who seek their advancement by the ruin of others. Servants, for example, who seek the favour of employers by reporting, often falsely, concerning fellow-servants.
- II. THE UNFORTUNATE PRINCE. *Mephibosheth*. (1.) *His extraction*. Grandson of a great king. Son of the eldest born in the house of Saul. Heir to the throne. His brilliant prospects. (2.) *His present position*. Expatriated. Living beyond Jordan, on the bounty of old friends. Has lost the throne, and even the family estate. His house fallen. Saul a suicide. Jonathan slain in battle. The father of a child whose prospects he could not view but with fear. In such an age there were many who would willingly kill the man who might be supposed to be obnoxious to a reigning power. His uncle Ishbosheth had been so murdered. (3.) *His bodily infirmity*. Lamé in both feet. 'Unable, therefore, to push his fortunes. Helpless. Cannot aid a friend, nor escape a foe. A sad future before him.
- III. THE MAGNANIMOUS KING. *David*. (1.) *In his prosperity, gave place to tender feelings*. Wealth and honour had not hardened his heart, or made him indifferent to the sorrows of others. (2.) *Sought out the afflicted*. Many are not too willing to aid the afflicted when they seek help. Very few "search out a cause" for charity. David, with the cares of a kingdom on his shoulders, undertook for this poor cripple. (3.) *Returned good for evil*. Mephibosheth the sole surviving male representative of that Saul from whom he had suffered so much. A fine example

"To kings, of whom are many, and the good
Are rare,"—(*Dante, Para.* xiii. 102.)

Not content with mere amnesty; but took the lame and fallen prince under his protection, and reinstated him in his property, &c.

LEARN—

- I. To guard against deceit and craft.
- II. To commiserate the unfortunate.
- III. To imitate the magnanimity of David.
- IV. To gratefully remember the mercy of the Great King against whom we have rebelled.

B.C. 1034. 2 Sam. xii. 1—14.

- 1 *Lord sent*. Whom he sends must go. He sent Moses to Egypt, and Jonah to Nineveh. . . *Nathan* (see *analysis*). . . *David*, who, though a great man, had fallen into sin. . . *came*, into the audience chamber of the palace. *and said*. He spoke in a parable (see *anal.* of less. 89). . . *two men*, David and Uriah. . . *city*, Jerusalem. . . *rich*, David. . . *poor*, Uriah. . .
- 2,3 *flocks, herds*. David had wives, &c., of his own. . . *lamb*, his wife—Bathsheba. . . *bought*, &c. He had obtained his wife at the cost of much anxiety, &c. . . *nourished*, and taken much care of. . . *grew him*, his and her love had increased. . . *children*, who called her by the dearest name. . . *meat*, which he laboured hard to procure for her. . . *bosom*, was very dear to his
- 4 heart. . . *daughter*, most tenderly watched and tended. . . *traveller*, a wicked wandering thought, a sinful desire. . . *spared*, passed by. . . *his own*, of which he had so many, and near at hand. . . *wayfaring man*, and no true friend (A.S. *weg fêrende*, Fr. *faran*, to travel). . . *and*, little thinking what the object of Nathan was. . . *anger*, at the wrong done to one of his subjects whom, as king, he was bound to protect. . . *Lord*, who delivers the poor and needy. The poor man's friend, whose servant I—David—profess to be. . . *die*. He passed sentence on himself, but God in
- 6 mercy did not execute it. . . *restore*, as a punishment, and both to make good the loss and compensate the grief. . . *no pity* (Jas. ii. 13). The Lord showed David more pity than David would have shown this rich man.
- 7 God is kinder to us than we to each other (Isa. lv. 8). . . *Nathan*, bold because God had sent him. . . *Thou*, King D., who art so angry. . . *the man*, the very rich man I speak of. . . *saith Lord*. It is *His* word, and not mine. . . *anointed thee*, by the hand of a great prophet. . . *king*, when thou wast but a shepherd. . . *delivered*, more than once. . . *Saul*, a powerful king. . . *gave* : for had he not, thou couldst not have gotten it. . . *master's*, Saul. . . *Israel, Judah*, adding the former to the latter. . . *too little*, for thy real happiness. . . *such things*, as might be needed to complete thy
- 9 bliss. . . *despised*, slighted and broken. . . *commandment*. The 10th (Ex. xx. 13, 14). . . *evil sight* (Ps. li. 4). . . *Uriah*, one of D.'s bravest officers (2 Sam. xi., xxiii. 39; 1 Ki. xv. 5; 1 Ch. xi. 41). . . *killed sword*, or
- 10 taken care that he should get killed. . . *sword depart*. The instrument of his sin should be the instrument of punishment also (Matt. xxvi. 52).
- 11 *own house*. Rebellion of Absalom. . . *wives*, i. e. in the course of my providence I will permit this to be done. Thou hast injured a loving
- 12 husband, and I will permit thee to be injured in the same way. . . *secretly*, as ashamed of men knowing it, and as feeling it to be wrong; by thy secret sin Uriah's good name was not traduced; but thy name shall be dishonoured as his might have been. . . *all Israel*. Thy disgrace shall be known far
- 13 and wide as thy kingdom. . . *David*. Com. with Ahab, who would have slain the faithful preacher (1 Ki. xviii. 9, 10, 17; xix. 1—3). . . *sinned*. Herein is the man after God's own heart seen. He truly repented. . . *the Lord*, against man too, but in his deep sorrow he put his sin in its true light. . . *Nathan said*, when he saw the repentance. . . *put away*, pardoned.
- 14 *not die*. Com. with D.'s words (v. 5). . . *occasion*, furnished an opportunity that such would gladly seize. . . *blaspheme*, revile religion when they saw one whose profession was so conspicuous commit a great sin. . . *child die*. No punishment for the child. Taken from evil to come.
- S. J. C. ii. 107. *Religion Teaching by Example* (Dr Dickenson), 100, 110. K. D. B. I. iii. 390.

True Preacher—Severity of Human Judgment—Divine View of Sin, &c.

NOTE ON NATHAN.* Few incidents of his life recorded. When David proposed to build a house for God, N. ventured to encourage him (2 Sa. vii. 1—3). The night after he received the Divine command and prevented the king from executing this great work (vii. 4—17). N. next appears as the bold and skilful reprover of D. in the matter of Bathsheba (xii. ; *com.* Ps. li.). When the second son of Bathsheba was born, N. (xii. 24, 25) gave him the name of *Jedidiah* (beloved of Jehovah). Of this child, better known as Solomon, N. is supposed to have been the teacher. N. recognized S. as the successor of David, and took an active share in thwarting the attempt of Adonijah (1 Ki. i. 8—53). He was the writer of a history of Solomon, which is lost (2 Ch. ix. 29), and framed the form of worship which Hezekiah afterwards revived (2 Ch. xxix. 25). N.'s name does not again occur historically, but his sons are mentioned amongst the chief of the officers and friends of Solomon (1 Ki. iv. 5). The history illustrates :—

- I. THE CHARACTER OF A TRUE PREACHER. In Nathan. (1.) His *boldness*. He was sent to a powerful king. Does not hesitate. His life in the king's hands. (2.) His *obedience*. God sent him. He goes without a question. (3.) His *tact*. Adopts popular method of teaching. Parable. Knowing the deceitfulness of sin, he paints the case as though it were the sin of another. Depicts a less sin than David had committed. (4.) His *sternness*. Pronounces the mind of God and describes the punishment. Personal. "Thou, &c." (5.) His *tenderness*. Tone and manner alter when he sees a sign of repentance and hears confession of sin.
- II. THE SEVERITY WITH WHICH THE FAULTS OF OTHERS ARE JUDGED. David, not thinking who was meant by Nathan,—(1.) Was *exceedingly angry*. His sense of justice stirred by the wrong that he saw had been done to the poor man, and by the fact that he who did it was rich and not driven by necessity. How angry should we be with our sins, if we saw them, as we do the faults of others. (2.) Would *punish severely*. Death, for taking, as he thought, a lamb. What then did *he* deserve by his own rule! If we were to be punished for our faults, in proportion to the punishment we think others deserve, what would be our fate?
- III. THE DIVINE VIEW OF SIN AND REPENTANCE. (1.) Of *sin*. Hates it. Sends a servant with a special message. Will not treat it indulgently in his children. Nay, because they are his children, expects more of them. He remembers—if we forget—the mercy he has shown. (2.) Of *repentance*. This sin of David should be read in the light of the 51st Psalm. Great as the sin was, on repentance, God forgave him. No true repentance except sin be put in its true relation to God, as *against Him*.

LEARN—

- I. To entertain with respect the true preacher of the Word of God.
- II. To regard our own sins with severity, and of others with charity.
- III. To turn to God with humble, penitent, and believing heart.

B.C. 1024. 2 Sam. xv. 1—30.

- 1 *Absalom*=father of peace. Third s. of David by Maachah, dau. of Talmai, k. of Geshur, born at Hebron (2 Sam. iii. 3; 1 Ch. iii. 2). . . *prepared*.
- 2 First step in acquiring popularity was to attract notice thus. . . *rose early*. This was his custom. . . *gate*, where cases in law were tried. . . *controversy*=lawsuit. . . *came*, out of the provinces. . . *what city*. A pretended
- 3 interest in his affairs. . . *matters*, case in hand. . . *good*, &c. (Prov. xviii. 17). Yet he only heard one side. . . *no man*. As a king's son he would
- 4 be believed; being *early* there was none to contradict. . . *I judge*. And the people, being duped by fair words and appearances, wished it also. . .
- 5 *do justice*, and doubtless much injustice. . . *obeisance*, because he was the king's son. . . *forth hand*, and stopped him from bowing himself. . .
- 6 *kissed*. Gave him the greeting of an equal. . . *manner*, promises and appearances. . . *all Israel*, people of all the tribes. . . *stole*, did not win by
- 7 fair and honest methods. . . *hearts*, affections. . . *forty years*, a corrupt reading, should be 4 yrs, i.e. 4 yrs after his return to Jerusalem. . .
- 8 *Hebron*, his birth-place. . . *a vow*, thus he deceived his father, as he had
- 9 deceived the people. . . *Go peace*. D. would rejoice at this token of religious-
- 10 ness in his son. . . *spies*, secret messengers. . . *reigneth*, thus he was to
- 11 be proclaimed king. . . *two hundred*, not enough for rebellion, yet too
- 12 many for the vow. . . *simplicity*, sincerity. They were ignorant of the
- 13 purpose. . . *Ahithophel*=brother of folly. David's trusted councillor (1 Ch. xxvii. 33, 34; Ps. xli. 9; lv. 12—14). . . *Giloh*, city in hill-country
- 14 of Judah (Jos. xv. 51). . . *messenger*, friendly to David, from Hebron. . .
- 15 *flee*. It was hard to fight against a son; besides he knew not how far the
- 16 plot had spread. . . *whatsoever*. Either to fight or fly. . . *left ten*, &c.
- 17 (xii. 11). . . *far off*, to be out of immediate danger, yet near enough to
- 18 watch events. . . *Cherethites*=executioners or couriers (viii. 18; xx. 7, 23; 1 Ki. i. 38, 44; 1 Ch. xviii. 17). . . *Pelethites*=runners. . . *Gittites*, of
- 19 Gath (Jos. xiii. 3; 2 Sam. xxi. 19; 1 Ch. xx. 5). . . *said*, magnanimously.
- 20 *Ittai*=with the Lord (xviii. 2, 5, 12). . . *exile*, as I now am. . . *return*. D. would not have his distress be a cause of other men's misfortunes. . .
- 21 *answered*, like a true friend. Would not leave D. in his distress (Pro.
- 22 xviii. 24). . . *pass over*. D. accepted this generous offer of aid. . . *little*
- 23 *ones*. Even the children and women of his people. . . *wept*, touched by the spectacle of such adversity, and its unnatural cause. . . *Kidron*.
- 24 Another, in after days, passed over that brook (Jo. xviii. 1). . . *Zadok*=just (viii. 17; 1 Ch. xii. 28). Z. was true to D., and afterwards anointed Solomon (2 Ki. i.). . . *Abiathar*=father of abundance. An old friend of
- 25 D. (1 Sam. xxii. 11—23; xxx. 6, 9; xxx. 7; 1 Ch. xxvii. 34). . . *Carry back*. The ark should be cared for, though *he* were a wanderer. . . *bring shew*: and the ark in Jerusalem would make D. the more anxious to return.
- 26 *good him*. And what seemed good to the Lord would be best for D. . .
- 27 *seer*? And therefore one who should *see* what is the right thing to be done.
- 28 *certify me*, assure me that my return will be safe if the Lord please that I
- 29,30 shall do s. . . *tarried there*, in their proper place by the ark. . . *went up*. When he fled, and passed over the brook Kidron. . . *Olivet*, so called from the olives abounding there (Zec. xiv. 4; Lu. xix. 29, 37; xxi. 37; xxii. 39; Ac. i. 12). . . *wept*, at leaving the ark, and because of his son. . . *covered head*. In token of their deep sorrow, and as ashamed to behold the sight. . . *weeping* (Lu. xxiii. 28).

S. J. C. ii. 115, 117.

Unnatural Son—Sorrowful Father—Light in the Cloud.

FLIGHT OF DAVID. He left the city accompanied by his whole court. The first halt was at a spot on the outskirts of the city, known as "the Far House" (v. 17). The second was by a solitary olive tree (v. 18; Lu. xx.). Here the meeting with Ittai (Matt. xxvi. 35). Passage of the Kidron. Zadok joins them and is sent back. The procession wound up the mountain. At the top, the meeting with Hushai (v. 32). In him D. saw his first gleam of hope. For warlike purposes he was useless; but of political stratagem he was a master. A moment before (v. 31), the tidings had come of the treason of Ahithophel. To frustrate his designs, Hushai was sent back, just in time to meet Absalom arriving from Hebron. It was now noon. Presently, Ziba (less. 104) met him with the false tidings about Mephibosheth. At Bahurim, on the downward pass, he encountered Shimei (xvi. 5), who followed the fallen king with furious curses which D. never forgot (1 Ki. ii. 8). D. alone was calm amid the rage caused by Shimei. The rebellion of Absalom induced him to make light of other sorrows. At the close of the day (2 Sa. xvi. 14) they rested at the ford of the river. Late at night came news from Jerusalem (xvii. 15, 22), and before the dawn next day D. and his followers passed over Jordan. (Abridged from *S. J. C.* ii. 118—122.)

I. THE UNNATURAL SON. *Absalom.* (1.) *Appearance.* Very beautiful. Hair very beautiful and long. Cut yearly, and weighed 200 shekels (? was not this the value of it). (2.) *Character.* Vain, crafty, ambitious. Persistent in evil. Persevered for 4 years in undermining his father's influence. (3.) *Conduct.* Talked over the people. Having *stolen* their hearts he retired to Hebron on a pretence. Place where his father first reigned. The signal of revolt. The kindness of his father had no good effect on him. His father now advanced in life, i. e. 62 years of age. Absalom might at least have waited for his father's death.

II. THE SORROWFUL FATHER. *David.* Appalling news from Hebron. His own son in arms against him! and that son Absalom. Knows not how far the conspiracy extends. His household troops, &c., may be bribed. Even Ahithophel deserts him. Resolves to leave Jerusalem. The departure. The procession. Sorrow of the populace.

III. BRIGHT LIGHTS IN THE DARK CLOUD. David even now has signs of hope. (1.) *Zadok* willing to go with him with the ark: willing to return and watch. (2.) *Ittai* will not be repelled. Follows him with his men. (3.) *Ziba*, though with crafty intent, brings provender. [If his tale were true, then Absalom would have to repel Mephibosheth. There would be hope for David in this struggle against the house of Saul. Even Shimei would prove that house had friends, and therefore that A. had difficulties.] (4.) *Hushai* volunteers his help. Returns to Jerusalem to watch and frustrate Ahithophel and communicate with David. (5.) *Trust in God.* The brightest light of all. "Let him do what seemeth good to him."

LEARN—Cultivate filial feelings.

B.C. 1015. 1 Ki. ii. 1—11.

- 1 *days* : it is noticeable that in Scripture life is generally reckoned by days (*com.* Gen. v. 5, 8, 11, 14, 23, 27; ix. 29; xlvii. 9; 1 Ch. xxiii. 1; xxiv. 15; Job xii. 12; Ps. xxi. 4; lv. 23; xc. 9, 10, &c.). This even in the case of those who lived the longest. We talk of years, God of days (Ps. xc. 12). . . *nigh*, to their close. . . *die*, as all must (Jer. ix. 21). . . *charged*.
- 2 Dying words always impressive and solemn. . . *I go*, &c., going home. Death a part of a journey. Not annihilation, but going. . . *strong*. Nor think thou hast lost *all* in losing *me*. . . *a man*, to do a man's work, with
- 3 a man's spirit (2 Sam. x. 12). . . *keep*, hold fast, in memory, heart, life. *charge*. From Lat. *carrus*=a car, are derived *carica*=a ship of burden; and *caricare*, to load; hence *cargo*. A charge is therefore something laid on, a burden, *commission*, &c. . . *prosper*, there can be no true prosperity where there is not this obedience to the will of God. Prosperity of soul
- 4 (3 Jo. 2), as well as mere worldly success. . . *continue*, in the fulfilment of it. . . *he spake* (2 Sam. vii. 11; xvi. 25; Ps. lxxxix. 29—37). . . *If*, &c.
- 5 Many of the promises are conditional, and this is reasonable. . . *Moreover*. In addition to this charge concerning thyself and thy personal religion. . . *knowest*, for it was publicly notorious. . . *Joab*, Eldest of 3 sons of Zeruah, D.'s sister. A brave, but revengeful and jealous man. . . *did*. *me*. D. being disgraced by the acts of his servant. . . *Abner*. Having in self-defence, and in time of war, slain Asahel, Joab's youngest bro.; Joab in a time of peace slew Abner (2 Sam. ii. 12—32). D. denounced, but was then too weak to punish the murderer (iii. 6, 39). . . *Amasa*. Being superseded for his murder of Absalom. Joab then murdered Amasa who
- 6 was appointed commander-in-chief in his stead. . . *hoar* (A.S. *hár*), white. *in peace*. This command was not dictated by personal resentment; but by justice. D. was blamable for having so long neglected the punishment
- 7 of this murderer. . . *kindness*. As he would punish the wicked; so he does not forget the good. . . *Barzillai*=of iron; the rich Gileadite who supported D. during the rebellion of Absalom (2 Sam. xvii. 27; xix. 31—39). . . *table*, treat them as guests. Thus by doing good may we benefit
- 8 his children. . . *Shimei*=renowned. D. once saved his life (2 Sam. xvi. 5—13). Afterwards S. obtained forgiveness (xix. 16—23). . . *Bahurim*=young men. Village near Jerusalem, beyond Olivet to the E. (2 Sam. xvi. 5; xvii. 17—21). . . *grievous*, strong. . . *hold guiltless*, he is a guilty man, beware of him. [Solomon ordered him to stay in Jerusalem: for disobedience he was put to death, v. 36—46.] . . *blood*, &c. Of the many explanations of this act, prob. the best is that D. spoke in his magisterial character: knew well the character of S.; and that some crime would be
- 10 done by him. . . *sleep*. *fathers*, and now dwells with the great fathers of the true Israel of God.

“This that shines
Midmost for pupil, was the same who sang
The Holy Spirit's song, and bare about
The ark from town to town; now doth he know
The merit of his soul-impassioned strains,
By their well-fitted guerdon.”—(Dante, Par. xx. 33.)

Notes on Life and Death of David.

NOTE ON DAVID. D. = *beloved*. 8th and youngest son of Jesse. Principal events of life. First introduced to us at the anointing (1 Sa. xvi). Battle with Goliath. Plays on harp before Saul. Becomes S.'s armour-bearer. Friend of Jonathan. Made captain of king's body-guard. Warlike exploits. Popularity. Jealousy of Saul. David again tries before the king. Attempted assassination. Marries Michal. Saul tries to arrest D., who escapes by help of Michal. Takes refuge with Samuel at Ramah. Interview with Jonathan. Goes to Nob, thence to Gath, where he simulates madness. Returns to Judah. Engedi. Nabal. Abigail. Battle for the well of Bethlehem. Ziklag. Hebron. Revolt of Abner. Becomes K. of all Israel at Jerusalem. Brings up the ark. Regulates services of the sanctuary. Bathsheba. Nathan. Repentance, Ps. li. "David's lyre grew mightier than his throne." Absalom's rebellion and death. Sheba's insurrection. Adonijah's revolt. At last died in hope, and passed away.

"Him who sang
The songs of the Supreme; himself supreme
Among his tuneful brethren."—(*Dante, Para. xxv. 71.*)

David's character clearly shown in events of his life. Shepherd, soldier, poet, prophet, king: tender, generous, sometimes fierce; easily moved to passion, and easily appeased; a faithful friend, an indulgent father. "There is scarce a personage of Scripture history on whom our thoughts and love centre so much as on David, whose strains of inspired song intertwined with all the devotional and joyful feelings of God's people in every age." The Psalms are a rich heritage to the Church, and throw great light on his state of mind at different crises. (*Ill. Ps. xlii., com. 2 Sa. xv. 23—30; Ps. xxiv., com. 2 Sa. vi.*)

CHIEF INCIDENTS TO BE NOTED AT HIS DEATH. (1.) Summonses his son and successor, Solomon, to his side. (2.) Makes a solemn statement. I go, &c. Of all the earth. Death common lot of all. In this, mighty David not exempt from the fate of his meanest subject. (3.) Delivers a solemn charge:—(*a.*) To be brave and firm. (*b.*) To obey God. (*c.*) To regard obedience to Divine law as the sole condition of success. (*d.*) Enforces this by recalling Divine promise. (*e.*) Proceeds to judicial and personal matters. This charge, the solemn words of a king to his successor. He makes special mention of Joab, whom he had weakly spared, though a wicked man. This indulgence of so vile a person a blemish on good government. Speaks of Barzillai. By kindness to his house, friends might be multiplied. Scarcely anything more disgraceful in a king than forgetfulness of benefits. An example of royal gratitude good for the nation. Delivers a caution concerning Shimei. Would not have him slain till he had filled the cup of his iniquity. But would have him watched, and punished for the first act of disobedience. (*f.*) *David dies*. Slept with his fathers.

LEARN—I. History of David a wonderful story of Divine providence.

II. The best man not perfect.

III. David a great sinner, a great penitent, a great saint.

B.C. 1014. 1 Ki. iii. 5—15; iv. 29—34.

- 5 *Gibeon*, see ix. 2 (less. 83). . . *appeared*, in some angelic form, or by an audible voice only. . . *dream*, or vision (Gen. xxviii. 12, 13; Num. xii. 6). *ask*, he does not promise to give all or anything that might be asked.
- 6 Through S. we are taught the fittest thing to ask. . . *said*. First thanking God on behalf of his father. . . *a little child*, not in years, but in knowledge. . . *go out*: conduct in public. . . *come in*: private life. . .
- 8 *thy people*, therefore of all people should be wisely governed. . . *chosen*. Hence the object of special regard, as their ruler should also be. . . *great*. Their ruler therefore should command respect. . . *numbered*, hyperbolic.
- 9 He simply meant that they were very numerous indeed. . . *Give*, what? What would *you* most have desired? (1 Ki. v. 7). . . *understanding*. Heb. hearing heart, i. e. a humble heart, one that is not self-reliant, but that understands by learning. . . *discern*, distinguish. . . *who*, what man of
- 10 himself? . . . *great*, numerous and influential. . . *pleased*, much more than he would have been had many other things been asked. . . *this thing*,
- 11 wisdom. . . *long life*, for life may be long and void of good; or short and full of good. . . *riches*: which often bring more care than happiness, and may be had along with the worst poverty (Rev. iii. 17). . . *life.enemies*.
- 12 For to forgive is better than revenge. . . *given*, he gave more than was
- 13 asked in the direction of S.'s desire. . . *also given*, things that were not
- 14,15 asked (Mat. vi. 33). . . *lengthen.days* (Ps. xci. 16). . . *dream*, and yet more than a dream. . . *stood.ark*. This first recorded act of S. after the dream proves that he had not asked for wisdom in vain.

. . . "he was a king, who ask'd
For wisdom, to the end he might be king
Sufficient."—(*Dante, Par. xiii. 88.*)

- (1 Ki. iv. 29—34.) . . 29. . . *wisdom*, in answer to prayer (iii. 9). . . *largeness*. *heart*, breadth and variety of desire in direction of wisdom and learning. *as.sand*, which can no more be estimated than the variety of his attain-
- 30 ments. . . *children of.east*. Babylon and Assyria were celebrated for certain kinds of knowledge. Wise men of the East, magicians, astrologers, &c. (Jer. xlix. 7; Obad. 8). . . *wisdom.Egypt*, which was also much
- 31 celebrated (Ac. vii. 22). . . *Ethan.Heman.Darda* (1 Ch. ii. 6). . . *Mahol*. Wonderful that this man's four sons should be all so wise; and the only men with whom S. could be at all compared. . . *fame*. The report of his wisdom spread through other lands. A little folly goes a great way; it
- 32 takes much wisdom to travel far. . . *three thousand proverbs*, of which many are preserved in the book of Prov. . . *songs*: sacred and other choruses:
- 33 of which *the song* is preserved as an example. . . *spake*, discoursed learnedly about. . . *trees*, the vegetable kingdom. . . *from*, large trees such as *cedar* (Frontispiece to *D. B. N. S.* ii.). . . *to*, even the small plants, such as . . . *hyssop*, to this day naturalists are not agreed as to the precise plant called hyssop. . . *beasts.fowl* (x. 22), he imported apes and peacocks, and seems to have had a royal menagerie. . . *fishes*. Some were kept in the royal preserves. [He speaks of the fish-pools of Heshbon. This H. was cap. of K. Sihon, 20 m. E. of mouth of Jordan. Among the ruins (at
- 34 *Hesbân*) are cisterns, and an ancient reservoir.] . . *of all people*. Of these travellers the queen of Sheba is a familiar example (1 Ki. x. 1; Mat. xii. 42; Lu. xi. 31. See Prov. iii. 13—26).

S. J. C. ii. 166, 230—244.

Solomon's Prayer—God's Answer—Our Need.

NOTE ON CEDAR. Heb. name *Erez* = compact. (1.) *Scripture references.* Very lofty (Ezek. xxxi. 3—5), spreading (Ps. lxxx. 10 ; xcii. 12), durable ; and used for beams, boards, pillars, ceilings (1 Ki. vi. 9, 10 ; vii. 2 ; Jer. xxii. 14), for masts (Ez. xxvii. 5), for carved images (Is. xlv. 14). It was fragrant, and used for purifications (Lev. xv. 14 ; Nu. xix. 6). Once abundant in Palestine (1 Ki. vi. 27), used by early Hebrew kings (2 Sa. v. 11 ; 1 Ch. xiv. 1 ; 2 Ch. ii. 8). (2.) *Scientific note.* The genus *Cedrus* belongs to natural order *Coniferae*. Several species. *Cedrus Libani* = cedar of Lebanon, is the c. of Scripture. It is very probable that varieties of pine and yew are included, in some places, under the name cedar. There are a few very ancient cedars yet on Mt Lebanon. A list of travellers and the number of cedars found by them [from Belon who (1550) found 23, to Wilson (1843) who found 12] is given in *D. B. N. S.* ii. 269.

NOTE ON HYSSOP. Heb. *Ezov*. Mentioned nine times in *Old*, and twice in *New Test.* Used for sprinkling blood of paschal lamb (Ex. xii. 22), in Levitical ritual (Lev. xiv. 4, 6, 51, 52 ; Nu. xix. 6, 18), at the crucifixion (Jo. xix. 29). Of the 20 or 30 plants suggested as the true hyssop, none seems to fulfil all conditions so well as the caper-plant (*Capparis spinosa*). It grows "out of the wall," its stalks supply both rod and bunch, is esteemed in the E. for cleansing properties. Royle, Stanley, Burckhardt, Richardson, Bonar, &c., &c., believe this plant to be the true hyssop. [For sketch see *D. B. N. S.* ii. 272.]

I. SOLOMON'S PRAYER. (1.) He was encouraged to put it. "*Ask*," &c. We are encouraged to pray, and have this example. (2.) It is noticeable for what is omitted. Might have asked for many things that most would then have thought of. (3.) Though brief, yet comprehensive. Wisdom the key to many treasures. "Knowledge is *power*." Way to *wealth*. Length of life.

"He was a king who ask'd
For wisdom, to the end he might be king
Sufficient."—(*Dante*, Par. xiii. 85.)

II. GOD'S ANSWER. The prayer approved by a God of infinite wisdom. Answered. The wisdom of Solomon included :—(1.) Understanding of Divine things. (2.) Moral philosophy. Proverbs, &c. (3.) Deep insight into human nature. Wonderful sketches of character in Book of Prov. (4.) Prudence in exercise of judicial functions. (5.) Great poetic capability (his songs, &c.). (6.) Much and varied scientific knowledge.

III. OUR NEED. Wisdom in the highest form is religion. "Fear of Lord beginning of wisdom." The good man is a wise man. Religion has the promise of the life that now is, &c. Its principles of industry, integrity, &c., &c., conducive to present prosperity. Other things being equal, the religious man should make the best of this world, as well as of the next. Godliness with contentment, &c. If any man lack wisdom, &c.

LEARN—Consider what we should *omit from*, as well as *include in*, prayer.

B.C. cir. 1000. 1 Kings iv. 1—28.

- 1 *all Israel*, a much larger territory than the original promised land. The boundary line lay along the coast northwards as far as the Orontes, then, with a bend E. to the Euphrates (1 Ch. xviii. 3), down the Euphrates to Carchemish (*Circesium*). From thence S. and parallel to the coast of the Mediterranean to lat. 31; thence S.W. to the Red Sea and then across
- 2 the Isthmus of Suez. . . *princes*: first time that this title was borne generally by the officers of the court; it having been almost confined to Joab. *priest*: union of the priestly and secular functions. It is well to remember, when looking at the position of priests (Jewish or Christian) in the old
- 3 time, that they were well nigh the only educated men. . . *scribes*, secretaries of state. Two instead of one. . . *recorder*, remembrancer, historian-
- 4 grapher (2 Sam. viii. 16; xx. 24; Esth. vi. 1). . . *Benaiah*, successor of
- 5 Joab. . . *host*, army. . . *officers*, chief officers of state. . . *Nathan*, the
- 6 prophet. . . *friend*, the favourite, or private secretary. . . *household*, servants, &c, of the palace. . . *tribute*, taxes, revenue; he was Chancellor of
- 7 the Exchequer (v. 13, 14; ix. 5). . . *twelve officers*, receivers-general. Heads of commissariat department. Taxes are paid *in kind* in the East. *each month*: and as each had a district allotted to him, each district sent
- 8 annually a month's provision. . . *mount Ephraim*, in the centre of the king-
- 9 dom (Deut. xxxiii. 16). . . *Makaz*, &c., towns on borders of Dan and
- 10,11 Judah. . . *Aruboth*, &c., prob. in Judah. . . *Dor*, now *Tantûra* (T. L.
- 12,13 B. 500), in Manasseh. . . *Taanach*, &c., in Issachar and Zebulun. . . *Ramoth-gilead*, E. of Jordan, and N. of mt Gilead (Num. xxxii. 11). . . *Argob*. For description of the wonderful ruins of the 60 fenced cities of A.,
- 14 see "*Giant Cities of Bashan*" (Porter). . . *Mahanaim* (less. 27, 102). . .
- 16,19 *Asher* (less. 31). . . *land*, i. e. the rural districts beyond the *towns*
- 20 named in v. 13. . . *Judah Israel*, comprising the whole land, and thus distinguished from the time of David. . . *eating merry*, plenty, wealth, safety.
- 21 *kingdoms*, tributary to Solomon. . . *river*, the Euphrates on the N. and E. . . *Philistines*, in the W. on the sea-coast. . . *Egypt*, in the S. . . *they*,
- 22 these tributary kingdoms. . . *presents*, of a tributary kind. . . *provision*, lit. bread. . . *measures*, Heb. *cors*. A cor=75 gals, 5 pts, $\times 30=2268$
- 23 gals, 6 pts. . . *meal*=4537 gals, 4 pts. . . *fat oxen*, stalled ox (Prov. xv. 17). *out.pastures*, prob. for the household troops. . . *harts.roebucks.fallow deer*,
- 24 dif. classes of the deer kind. . . *river*, Euphrates. . . *Tiphsah*=ford, i. e. of Euphrates. The Greek Thapsacus. Landing-place for goods from Babylon, 600 m. distant. Afterwards called Amphipolis. *Ed-Deyr* is sup. to mark the site, but Rawlinson places it at *Suriyeh*. . . *Azzah*=Gaza. . .
- 25 *safely*, Heb. confidently. The power of S. secured this. . . *under*, &c., a picture of peace and prosperity. . . *Dan.Beer-sheba*, proverbial="from one end to the other." . . *all.days*=40 yrs, when this prosperity came to
- 26 an end in the wars and division of the kingdom that followed. . . *chariots*, for war. He preserved peace by being ready for war. . . *twelve thousand horsemen*, bodyguard and cavalry. There must have been infantry, though
- 27 nothing is here said of them. . . *those officers*, named in vv. 7—19. . . *table* (x. 5). The number of princes, ambassadors, &c., at his court, would involve a daily banquet. . . *dromedaries*, or swift camels, for messengers, &c. (less. 21). . . *charge*, his command or department. The prosperity of the kingdom resulted from this careful administration and minute supervision. The king's wisdom appointing right men to right places.
- S. J. C. ii. 166. *Porter's Giant Cities of Bashan (Argob)*, 13, 24, 28, 30, 89, 91.

The Kingdom of Solomon, and a Better One.

Solomon's fleet was in part manned by Tyrians. The chief ports were Elath and Ezion-geber, at head of E. gulf of R. Sea (Akabah). Trade was carried on with the Mediterranean Sea, Egypt, Arabia, and India. Kenrick says, "Ophir is a region variously identified with (1.) S. of Arabia, (2.) Sofala, on the African coast, opp. to Madagascar, and (3.) India." Stanley says that Ophir may be directly identified with the gold mines of Sumatra and Malacca (less. 111 on v. 11). Among the proofs of Solomon's sagacity and wealth was the building of Tadmor = city of palms (Palmyra), in the wilderness, as a barrier fortress, and outpost for the commerce of the East (*Gibbon's Decl. and Fall*, xi. ; *Giant Cities*, 321, 330 ; *Five Years in Damascus* (Porter), 220, 241 ; *S. S. P.* 7, 8, and note ; *R. B. R. app.* 147). Like the rest of his kingdom, the splendour of Tadmor has departed :—

" Palmyra's dead, where desolation sat,
From age to age, well-pleased in solitude
And silence, save when traveller's foot, or owl
Of night, or fragment mouldering down to dust,
Broke faintly on his desert ear,—awoke."—(*Course of Time*, bk vii.)

Compare with this kingdom *Analysis* of less. 111.

- I. THE KINGDOM OF SOLOMON. (1.) *Vast but limited*. Its geographical boundaries easily defined. (2.) *Populous but disaffected*. He reigned over more people than hearts. Seeds of rebellion awaiting their season. (3.) *Material, and therefore transient*. Fashion of this world, &c. So the kingdoms of Rome, Greece, Babylon, &c. (4.) *Wealthy yet poor*. Rich in gold, luxuries, &c., but poor towards the close in righteousness and religion. Material wealth by no means equally distributed.
- II. THE KINGDOM OF GOD. (1.) *Unlimited*. Earth, the lands and kingdoms thereof. (2.) *Subjects numerous and loyal*. "Thy saints shall bless thee," &c. (3.) *Spiritual and lasting*. Not meat, &c., but righteousness, peace, joy, &c. Solomon's kingdom around his subjects, God's kingdom within us. (4.) "*True riches*." "Having nothing, yet possessing all things." Even the lilies are better attired than S. in all his glory ; and "plants of righteousness,"—the saints of God,—are still more gloriously dressed.

LEARN—

- I. Better to own a kingdom than be part of one.
- II. Better to have Jesus for a king than Solomon.
- III. Better to labour to extend this kingdom than any other.
- IV. Better still to be in the kingdom of heaven.

B.C. cir. 1005. 1 Kings vi. 1—38.

- 1 *house. Lord.* It was *not* a place of religious assembly. "All public worship and sacrifices were performed, not in it, but towards it (Ps. v. 7; cxxxviii. 2; Jo. ii. 4; Dan. vi. 10; *com.* 1 Ki. viii. 44, 48), in the enclosed court, or courts in front. Viewed in regard to this special object, a building becomes large which seems small when compared with modern sacred structures." For this purpose, the earthly residence of Deity, the tabernacle (of which God gave the dimensions) was large enough; the
- 2 temple was twice that size. . . *length.* This was prob. the inside measure. *cubits.* Bp Cumberland's estimate is 36 yards long, 12 broad, 18 high. . .
- 3 *porch.* the external height of which was 120 cubits (2 Ch. iii. 4; *com.* 1
- 4,5 Ki. ix. 8). . . *windows,* broad within, narrow without. . . *against,* joining to. . . *the wall,* on the outside. . . *chambers,* Heb. floors, prob. corridors or galleries. . . *oracle,* Holy of holies. . . *nethermost,* lowest. . . *narrowed rests,* prob. rests made by narrowing, i. e. diminishing, the thickness of the walls upwards; by one cubit, for the middle, and another for the third chamber. A section of the wall would show two steps, or rests,
- 7 therefore. . . *not fastened,* but rest upon. . . *made ready,* hewn and carved. In the excavations under Jerusalem the tool-marks are yet visible (*Buchanan's Cler. Furlough*, 196). . . *tool heard.* Ill. the silent growth of spiritual temple, and preparation, in this world, of the saints for life of heaven. . .
- 8,9 *side,* Heb. shoulder, prob. in the porch. . . *finished.* See v. 38. . . *cedar*
- 10 (less. 108). . . *then,* as before stated, *vv.* 5, 6. . . *five high,* i. e. each chamber. Hence the *external* appearance of the temple was that of a modern
- 11 church with side aisles. . . *word. Lord came,* by priest, or by direct revelation. . . *if walk.* Divine favour secured, not by this costly work, but by
- 12 personal piety. . . *spake. David* (2 Sam. vii. 13). . . *dwell* (Zech. ii. 5). . .
- 13,14,15 *So,* acc. to his intention, and after this fashion. . . *built cedar,* lined, wainscoted. . . *both floor,* i. e. *from* the floor, &c. . . *ceiling,* which also
- 16 was panelled. . . *built,* with special care. . . *twenty cubits,* from the W.
- 17,18 end. . . *before it,* before the oracle. . . *knops,* or gourds. . . *flowers,*
- 19 carved in the cedar panels. . . *ark,* including the tables of the law. . .
- 20 *pure gold.* It is impossible to calculate the value of the gold used throughout the temple (but see *K. P. B.* on 1 Ch. xxix. 16). . . *altar* (v. 22; vii.
- 21 48; Ex. xxx. 1—3). . . *overlaid* having first carved the cedar. . . *partition,* of folding-doors, which opened and shut with golden chains. . . *over-*
- 22,23 *laid it,* i. e. the partition. . . *whole house,* the interior of it. . . *two cherubims,* distinct from, and larger than, those on the mercy-seat. . . *ten*
- 24 *cubits,* colossal size. Wings expanded. . . *five cubits.* Two wings touched
- 25 each other over the ark, the other two reached the opp. walls. . . *one size,*
- 26 possibly to suggest the equality of souls before God. . . *cherub.* Kitto (*D. B.*
- 27 *I.* iv. 84) regards the c. as a type of the redeemed Church of God. . . *within inner.* If Kitto, Bush, &c. are right, then the position and attitude of
- 28 the c. are very suggestive. . . *overlaid,* concealing their old material. . .
- 29 *carved figures,* which some have erroneously thought a breach of the law
- 30 (Ex. xx. 4). . . *palm trees,* whence the *all,* Ps. xcii. 12, 13. . . *floor gold*
- 31,32 (Rev. xxi. 21). . . *fifth wall,* prob. in thickness. . . *two doors,* leaves.
- 33,34 *fourth wall,* in thickness. . . *fir tree,* cypress. . . *two folding,* per.
- 35 each valve of the door folded. . . *gold fitted,* plates of gold; not thin, as
- 36 gold leaf. . . *three rows.* They were, therefore, of enormous thickness.
- 37 Strength, &c. (Ps. cii. 14; Mar. xiii. 1). . . *foundation laid.* The top of
- 38 Moriah was levelled, and enlarged by masonry. . . *fashion,* form and design.

 Texts on the Temple—the Porch.

TEXTS ON THE TEMPLE. SITE. Moriah, threshing-floor of Araunah (1 Ch. xxi. 28—30; xxii. 1; 2 Ch. iii. 1).—DAVID *wished to build* (2 Sa. vii. 12; 1 Ch. xxii. 7; xxix. 3; Ps. cxxxii. 2—5); *not permitted* (2 Sa. vii. 5—9; 1 Ki. v. 3; 1 Ch. xxii. 8); *is told his son shall* (2 Sa. vii. 12, 13; 1 Ch. xvii. 12); *his preparations* (1 Ch. xxii. 2—5; xxix. 2—5); *charged Solomon* (xxii. 6, 7, 21); *prayed for him* (xxix. 19); *charged his princes* (xxii. 17—19); *offerings of people* (xxix. 6—9).—SOLOMON *resolved to b.* (2 Ch. ii. 1); *was instructed* (iii. 3); *employed foreigners* (ii. 2, 17, 18; 1 Ki. v. 15); *applies to Hiram for architect* (2 Ch. ii. 7, 13, 14); 30,000 *Israelites* (1 Ki. v. 13, 14); *contracts for wood, stone, labour* (v. 6—12; 2 Ch. ii. 8—10); *begun* (1 Ki. vi. 1, 37; 2 Ch. iii. 2); *no noise of tools* (1 Ki. vi. 7).—DIVIDED INTO *the sanctuary* (2 Ch. iii. 5); *oracle* (1 Ki. vi. 19); *porch* (2 Ch. iii. 4).—ORACLE: *size* (1 Ki. vi. 16, 20); *cherubims* (2 Ch. iii. 11—13); *partitions of chains* (1 Ki. vi. 21); *doors* (vi. 31, 32); *floor and walls* (vi. 15); *ceiling* (2 Ch. iii. 5); *overlaid with gold* (iii. 7; 2 Ki. vi. 21), and *jewels* (2 Ch. iii. 6).—PORCH: *size* (1 Ki. vi. 3; 2 Ch. iii. 4); *pillars* (1 Ki. vii. 15—22; 2 Ch. iii. 15—17); *chambers* (1 Ki. v. 5—10); *courts* (vi. 36; 2 Ch. iv. 9); *windows* (1 Ki. vi. 4); *magnificence* (2 Ch. ii. 5, 9); *finished* (1 Ki. vi. 38).—TITLES: *house of Lord* (2 Ch. xxiii. 5, 12); *mountain of* (Isa. ii. 2); *Zion* (Ps. lxxxiv. 1—7); *mt Z.* (Ps. lxxxiv. 2). *For sacrifice* (2 Ch. vii. 12); *prayer* (Isa. lvi. 7; Matt. xxi. 13); *for things dedicated* (2 Ch. v. 1); *ark admitted* (v. 1; 2 Ki. viii. 1—9); *cloud of glory* (viii. 10, 11; 2 Ch. v. 13; vii. 2); *dedication* (1 Ki. viii. 12—66; 2 Ch. vi.); *fire sent down* (vii. 3); *built with hands* (Ac. vii. 47, 48); *destruction foretold* (Jer. xxvi. 18; Mic. iii. 12).—CHIEF EVENTS: *pillaged by Shishak* (1 Ki. xiv. 25, 26; 2 Ch. xii. 9); *repaired by Jehoash* (2 Ki. xii. 4—14; 2 Ch. xxiv. 4—13); *treasures given to Syrians* (2 Ki. xii. 17, 18); *to the Assyrians* (xvi. 14—18; 2 Ch. xxviii. 20, 21), *purified by Hezekiah* (xxix. 3—35), *who gives the treasures to the Assyrians* (2 Ki. xviii. 13—16). *Polluted by Manasseh* (xxi. 4—7; 2 Ch. xxxiii. 4—7. *Repaired by Josiah* (2 Ki. xxii. 3—7; 2 Ch. xxxiv. 8—13). *Purified by Josiah* (2 Ki. xxiii. 4—7, 11, 12). *Pillaged and burned by Babylonians* (2 Ki. xxv. 9, 13—17; 2 Ch. xxxvi. 18, 19).—ILLUSTRATES *Christ* (Jo. ii. 19, 21); *Church* (1 Cor. iii. 16; 2 Cor. vi. 16; Eph. ii. 20—22); *bodies of saints* (1 Cor. vi. 19).

“THE PORCH, the most startling novelty of the building, was, as being external to the rest, the part in which foreign architects were allowed the freest play. In the materials it was probably suggested by the Assyrian, in elevation by the Egyptian architecture, whilst the Tyrian sculptors displayed their art to the full in the two elaborate pillars. They stood immediately under the porch within, but not supporting it, and were called, either from the workmen, or from their own firmness and solidity, Jachin and Boaz. Their golden pedestals, their bright brazen shafts, their rich capitals, their light festoons, were thought prodigies of art so remarkable that the Israelites were never weary of recounting their glories. The gates of the porch usually stood wide open.” (*S. J. C.* ii. 211.)

B.C. 992. 1 Kings x. 1—13.

- 1 *Sheba* (acc. to Kalisch) = Saba, the chief city of Yemen, the leading province of Arabia. Sheba was long regarded as the most southern country in the world. . . *heard* (iv. 31, 34; less. 108). She did more than hear. . . *fame*, prosperity, wisdom, religion. The news might reach her by the Ophir fleet. . . *concerning name, &c.*, what God had done for him, and what he knew about God. . . *came*, a long distance. Men were accustomed to travel in search of wisdom in the old time. . . *prove*, test the truth of the things she had heard. . . *hard questions*, riddles, &c., the solution of which the Oriental thinks a great proof of wisdom. The Jews preserve among their traditions examples of these questions (*K. D. B. I.* iv. 109).
- 2 *train*, caravan. . . *camels* (less. 21). . . *spices* (Heb. *besâmim*), aromatics (fragrant gums, &c.). . . *gold*, which was obtained in Sheba (Ps. lxxii. 15; Isa. lx. 6). . . *precious stones*, jewels, gems. . . *communed*, shared in, conversed with (Lat. *communis*, common). . . *in heart*, mentally stored
- 3,4 against this occasion. . . *told*, solved. . . *questions*, *lit.* words. . . *seen wisdom*, seen all the wonderful things with which by his knowledge he had surrounded himself. . . *house*, the temple especially, and his own palace, the erection of which took 13 years (vii. 1), and other royal and public
- 5 buildings (vii. 2—12). . . *meat*, quantity, variety, quality, preparation. . . *sitting servants*, number and titles of those who attended the royal banquets. . . *attendance*, on state occasions. . . *ministers*, councillors, ambassadors from foreign courts. . . *cupbearers*, butlers, &c. (less. 34). . . *ascent* : (1.) All the imposing ceremonies and sacrifices of the worship in which S. took part. (2.) The splendid and numerous retinue accompanying him. (3.) The stairs and approaches to the temple. . . *spirit*. She was stupified
- 6 with astonishment. Felt her great inferiority. . . *she said*, what she would not have willingly acknowledged. . . *true*. She had thought it impossible that what she heard could be true. . . *heard*, from travellers and others. . . *acts*, buildings, works, laws, and religion. . . *wisdom*, learning,
- 7 wit, judgment. . . *believed not*, thought it too strange to be true. . . *mine eyes*, whose evidence I cannot dispute (Ps. xxxiv. 8). . . *half told* : (1.) Because the *whole* could not be. (2.) Because the reporters would be
- 8 deemed too flagrantly mendacious. . . *happy*, fortunate in highest and best sense: how much more who are the servants of one who is greater
- 9 than S.? . . *blessed thy God*. She—a heathen—saw the superiority of Israel's God over the gods of the heathen. The Jews have a tradition that the queen was converted to Judaism. . . *loved Israel*. She saw in a wise
- 10 king the regard of Providence for the nation. . . *hundred and twenty talents of gold*, estimated (*Reynolds*) at £843,905 10s. 4^d. sterling. More likely her gift = £41,062 10s., since a talent = £342 3s. 9^d., though others compute it at
- 11 £720,000. . . *great store*, immense quantity. . . *Hiram* = noble. *K.* of Tyre (2 Sam. v. 11; 1 Ch. xiv. 1; 1 Ki. v. 1—12, 18; ix. 11—14, 26, 28). . . *Ophir*. The situation a vexed question. Gen. believed to have been some part of Arabia. But Müller (*Lec. Sc. of Lang.* 189—191) says India. Duns thinks this the nearest approach to truth (*D. B. N. S.* ii. 279). . .
- 12 *almug trees*, prob. red sandal-wood (*Pterocarpus santalinus*). . . *made*,
- 13 caused to be made. The use points to the nature of the wood. . . *gave*, after a princely manner. . . *desire*; all he saw she wished to possess. . . *royal bounty*, a formal gift in exchange for her present. . . *turned own country*; filled with wonder at what she had seen and heard, and laden with the presents—"all her desire"—and the royal bounty of the great S.

Founded upon Matt. xii. 42 (Luke xi. 31).

PRECIOUS STONES NAMED IN THE BIBLE. *Agate* (Ex. xxxix. 12); *amethyst* (xxxix. 12; Re. xxi. 20); *beryl* (Ex. xxxix. 13; Ez. xxviii. 13; Re. xxi. 20); *carbuncle* (Ex. xxxix. 10; Ez. xxviii. 13); *chalcidony* (Rev. xxi. 19); *chrysolite* (Ez. xxviii. 13; Re. xxi. 20); *chrysopraxe* (Ez. xxviii. 13; Re. xxi. 20); *diamond* (Ex. xxxix. 11; Ez. xxviii. 13); *emerald* (Ex. xxxix. 11; Ez. xxviii. 13; Re. iv. 3; xxi. 19); *jacinth* (Re. xxi. 20); *jasper* (Ex. xxxix. 13; Ez. xxviii. 13; Re. iv. 3; xxi. 18, 19); *ligure* (Ex. xxxix. 12); *onyx* (Ge. ii. 12; Ex. xxxix. 6, 13; Ez. xxviii. 13); *ruby* (Job xxviii. 18; Pro. iii. 15); *sapphire* (Ex. xxxix. 11; Ez. xxviii. 13; Re. xxi. 19); *sardine* (Ex. xxxix. 10; Ez. xxviii. 13; Re. iv. 3; xxi. 20); *sardonyx* (Re. xxi. 20); *topaz* (Ex. xxxix. 10; Ez. xxviii. 13; Re. xxi. 20). (See also Isa. liv. 11, 12; Lam. iv. 7; Mal. iii. 16, 17.)

(Introduction.) Splendours of Solomon's court. Temple. Palaces. Public buildings. Gardens. Aviaries. Menageries. Body guard. Wisdom. Wealth. Religious ceremonies. Visit of Q. of Sheba. Such the scene suggested by Jesus, and he who spoke was "the carpenter's son." Greater than Solomon! How?

- I. IN THE EXTENT OF HIS KINGDOM. "Jesus shall reign, &c." Many lands already own his power over law, opinion, conscience, religion. What would Solomon think of *his* kingdom, could he return and witness the extending empire of Jesus?
- II. IN THE BENEVOLENCE OF HIS ADMINISTRATION. Laws of Solomon:—(1.) *Narrow*. Suited to one time and people. (2.) *Changeable*. Were continually altered. (3.) *Burdensome*. Ultimately broke up the nation (1 Ki. xii. 4, &c.). Laws of Jesus:—(1.) *Broad*. Suited to all. (2.) *Fixed*. (3.) Yoke easy, burden light.
- III. IN THE PERPETUITY OF HIS REIGN. Solomon reigned 40 years. Few kings reigned so long (Geo. III. 60 years). Jesus has already reigned many ages. And he shall reign for ever and ever.
- IV. IN THE BLESSEDNESS OF HIS SUBJECTS. Solomon's subjects were only temporally blessed. In this sense they were *safe, rich, well-judged, prosperous*. Jesus blesses his subjects *spiritually* and *eternally*. Peace, joy, hope, and in the world to come life everlasting.

LEARN—I. A lesson from the *visit* of Q. of Sheba. She came far to see Solomon: com. with the small pains men take to find Jesus. II. A lesson from the *confession* of Q. of Sheba. The half had not been told her. Nor has the half been told of the "unsearchable riches" of Christ. The wisdom of Solomon nothing as com. with "the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord." III. A lesson from the *present* of Q. of Sheba. Gold, spices, &c. We have to give Jesus our hearts. IV. A lesson from the *entertainment* of Q. of Sheba. Royal bounty supplied all her desire. A kingly present of material things. Christ's gifts imperishable. V. A lesson from the *future* in relation to Q. of Sheba. How will her conduct condemn us in the day of judgment? She did so much to see and hear K. Solomon, we do so little to be acquainted with Jesus!

B.C. 976. 1 Kings xii. 1—20.

- 1 *Rehoboam* (=he enlarges the people). The son of S. (the only one mentioned), by Naamah, an Ammonitess (1 Ki. xiv. 21) ; 41 years of age on accession ; reigned 17 years (975—957 B.C.). . . *Shechem* (less. 11, 33, 78, 85). Fit for its central position, but unfit in the excited state of the country. He had better stayed at Jerusalem. . . *make king*, to accept,
- 2 and not elect as of old (1 Sam. x. 19—21). . . *Jeroboam* (=whose people is many). An Ephrathite, whose father prob. died early (xi. 26). For his early history see xi. 26—40. . . *Egypt* (xi. 40). . . *heard*. Some seeing their opportunity, and knowing the prophecy (xi. 29, 35), would be glad
- 3 to tell the news. . . *sent called*, prob. some of the elders, most attached to his party. . . *congregations*, i. e. by their elders and princes. . . *came*, to crown R. and renew stipulations (1 Sam. x. 25). . . *spake*, loyally to all
- 4 appearance, but firmly. . . *father*, Solomon. . . *yoke grievous*. Doubtless the taxes, &c., were heavy (iv. 7, 20—23 ; ix. 15, 22, 23), but they would have borne it had S. been a good king ; as it was, God opened their eyes (xi. 6, 9—11). . . *lighter*, they did not say how much. . . *serve thee*. Even a hard service were better than rebellion, civil war, and weakening of the
- 5 kingdom by division. . . *three days* : short enough time with so much at
- 6 stake, and so much to ponder. . . *consulted*, for form's sake, as some ask advice. . . *old men* (Prov. xxvii. 10) : wise, experienced. . . *stood*, observers
- 7 of his wisdom, and friends of his house. . . *thou servant*, and not a lord of God's heritage (Prov. xv. 1). . . *good words* (Ec. x. 4 ; Zec. i. 13). . .
- 8 *forsook* (Prov. i. 2—5, 25, 30). . . *counsel old*, as old-fashioned, timid, diplomatic. . . *young men*, gay, shallow, frivolous. . . *with him*, and who, surrounded by plenty, knew little of popular wants. . . *stood him*, as his
- 9 boon companions. . . *what counsel*. As if they were capable of advising ! . .
- 10 *spake*, proud, defiant words. . . *finger loins*. A proverbial saying. As much as in thickness one surpasses the other, so does my power, my father's :
- 11 my yoke shall be in proportion. . . *And*, as if that were not enough ! . .
- 12 *whips*, such were his chastisements, as compared with mine. . . *scorpions*, twisted lashes armed with sharp and lacerating points. My father *chastised* ; if you rebel, I will *punish*. . . *came third day*, vainly hoping for
- 13 concessions ; Jeroboam looking for some ground of offence. . . *roughly*, Heb. hardly. . . *they gave*, and which taken might have saved his kingdom.
- 14,15 *young men*, whose words sounded brave. . . *cause Lord*. Judicial blindness. "Wisdom and common sense had been withheld from him, in order that the doom which had already gone forth against the house of
- 16 David might be accomplished" (*K. D. B. I.* iv. 138). . . *saw*, understood from the elders' report. . . *hearkened not*, favourably. . . *portion*, interest. *David*, i. e. the house of D. . . *inheritance*. A king is public property, for the advantage, by laws, revenues, and alliances, of his people. . . *tents Israel*. A war cry. Peaceful citizens must leave their *houses*, and as soldiers
- 17 dwell in tents. . . *see to*, defend. *We* have aided long enough. . . *Israel*, the 10 N. tribes. . . *Judah*, with whom, under the common name of J.,
- 18 Benjamin was incorporated. . . *sent tribute*, to collect the revenues. . . *all Israel stoned*. It was the solemn act of the body of the people by their
- 19,20 elders, &c. . . *rebelled*, Heb. fell away from. . . *all heard*, which proves that they were not all present at Shechem, or they would have *seen*. . . *come again*, their elders had told them. . . *they sent*, by their elders. . . *called*, invited, summoned. . . *congregation*, i. e. the council of elders. . . *Judah only*, including B., v. 17.

Historical Note—Table of Kings.

NOTES ON THE HISTORY, ETC. (1.) "With Solomon expired the glory and the power of the Jewish empire, which had extended from the shores of the Euphrates to the Mediterranean, from the foot of Lebanon to the desert bordering on Egypt." (2.) "The kingdom of Judah was rather less than Northumberland, Durham, and Westmoreland; the kingdom of Israel was very nearly as large as Yorkshire, Lancashire, and Cumberland." (3.) "Rehoboam the son of Solomon was received as king by the whole nation. But this title, though recognized at Jerusalem, seemed insecure without the formal adhesion of the tribes. Another assembly was, therefore, summoned at Shechem." (4.) The infatuation of Rehoboam (*com. v. 15*) may remind one of the old saying: "quem Deus vult perdere, prius dementat" (whom the God wills to destroy he first makes mad). (5.) On *v. 18* . . . "Fear smote, with none to chase him in his chariot whirl'd."—*Dante*, *Purg. xii. 43*.)

Table of the Kings of Judah and Israel (B.C. 976—587).

B.C.	JUDAH.	ISRAEL.	B.C.	JUDAH.	ISRAEL.
976	Rehoboam.	Jeroboam.	823	.	Jeroboam II.
959	Abijah.	.	808	Uzziah.	.
956	Asa.	.	783	.	<i>Interregnum.</i>
955	.	Nadab.	771	.	Zachariah.
953	.	Baasha.	770	.	Shallum.
931	.	Elah.	770	.	Menahem.
930	.	Zimri.	759	.	Pekahiah.
930	.	Omri.	757	.	Pekah.
919	.	Ahab.	756	Jotham.	.
915	Jehoshaphat.	.	741	Ahaz.	.
898	.	Ahaziah.	738	.	<i>Interregnum.</i>
895	.	Joram.	730	.	Hoshea.
891	Jehoram (in consort with his father).	.	726	Hezekiah.	.
		.	721	.	<i>The ten tribes carried into captivity.</i>
889	Jehoram (alone).	.			
884	Ahaziah.	.	697	Manasseh.	
883	<i>Athaliah.</i>	Jehu.	642	Amon.	
877	Joash.	.	640	Josiah.	
855	.	Jehoahaz.	609	Jehoahaz.	
841	.	Jehoash (in consort with his father).	609	Jehoiakim.	
		.	598	Jehoiachin.	
839		Jehoash (alone).	598	Zedekiah.	
			587	<i>Jerusalem finally taken.</i>	
837	Amaziah.	.			

LEARN—I. Advice of aged to be generally preferred to that of young. Besides having more knowledge and experience, they have less reason for giving bad advice (*Job xxxii. 7*).

II. Some of the aged we may all learn from:—prophets, apostles, &c.

III. Jesus the best adviser. Our father's and our own Friend.

B.C. 919. 1 Kings xvi. 29—33; xviii. 3—16.

- 29 *Ahab*, who some say was more *weak* than *wicked*. But "all wickedness is weakness," and such weakness is wickedness, especially in a king. . . of *Omri*, a wicked man (v. 25). Like father, like son. . . in *Samaria*, his capital. The seat of his court, and of his religion. Hosea (xiii. 16) and Micah (i. 6) pronounced a curse upon it. It is to the letter fulfilled. "The hill is now almost as bare as when Omri bought it of Shemer. A miserable village occupies a corner of the anc. site. All the rest is desolate. On the summit where Baal's temple was built, a group of lonely columns now stand in a corn-field. The present state of S. affords one of the most striking *ill.* of the fulfil. of prophecy in all Palestine" (*Porter*). . . above
- 30 *all*, even his father. He out-heroded Herod. . . if *light thing*. That was sin enough, and it led to a greater. . . sins (xiii. 33, 34). . . *Jezebel*. *Ethbaal*. "The very name of this K. and his dau. ending in Bel and Baal, show how greatly they were addicted to that idolatry" (*Trapp*).
- 32 *went*, ruled in part by his wife. . . *Baal* (see *anal.*). . . *built*, and the religion of the court became that of the country. . . *grove* (*com.* 2 Ki. xxiii. 6): hence not a grove of trees (though they were sometimes planted round heathen temples), but carved image of the god, or probably a row of such. . . *all kings*, who because of their power for good or evil, should take heed to the fashions they set.
-
- xviii. 3 *Obadiah* (=servant of Jehovah). A man of so much integrity that he was spared by the queen: or, he was a secret worshiper. The knowledge and power of his position enabled him to befriend other servants of God. *governor*, comptroller, chamberlain. . . *feared greatly*: was very pious. . .
- 4 *cut off*. The particulars of this persecution are not given (*com.* Neh. ix. 26; Matt. xxi. 35; Heb. xi. 35—40). . . *prophets*, religious teachers, priests, &c. . . *by fifty cave*, two caves, 50 in each. . . *fed*, prob. his desire to do good in this way prevented him from seeking his own comfort and
- 5 safety in Jerusalem. . . *bread*, all needful food. . . *fountains*, &c. Discover
- 6 where they are and what land is spared. . . *pass*, on a journey of inspection. . . *another way*, northwards. . . *in way*, on his journey. . . *met him*, his work in Zarephath being done. . . *knew him*, for a prophet. . . *Art.*
- 8 *Elijah*: this he surmised. He had heard of him. . . *tell Lord*, Ahab. . .
- 9 *slay me*. Ahab will think I am mocking him; will kill me if he does not
- 10 find thee, which God will prevent. . . *nation*, no tribe in his dominions. *seek*, to kill thee, or force thee to bring rain on the earth. . . *oath*. God
- 11 knew this, and had E. in his own keeping. . . *now*, in the presence of this
- 12 danger. . . *carry*, direct thee to go back to thy concealment. . . *my youth*. Hence he was so good a man. Who can say as much? Child father of
- 13 the man. . . *told*, by some whom I concealed till they could make their
- 14 escape; or by the God we both serve. . . *now*, death to thee if thou art
- 15 found, and to me if thou art not found, which will be the case. . . *Elijah said*, quite unmoved by the timid expostulations of good Obadiah. . . of *hosts*, and therefore able to defend me from Ahab's rage. . . *I stand*, as his servant, and am doing now his will. . . *show myself*: whom, except I do so, he cannot find. . . *to-day*. He is seeking water; he shall find me to whom the Lord has intrusted the shutting and opening of the
- 16 windows of heaven, as he thinks. . . *told him*: no longer afraid of the consequences. . . *to meet Elijah*; and doubtless purposing to slay him.

K. D. B. I. iv. 227. S. J. C. ii. 299. M. H. J. vol. i.

Persecutors—the Men, and their spirit.

HISTORICAL NOTE. Omri did worse than all that were before him. Ahab, his son, succeeded him. His wife was Jezebel, the cruel and wicked daughter of the king of Sidon, xvi. 27—33. Under her influence the worship of Baal, the Sun-god, was introduced, and his temple was openly built. She begun “the first GREAT PERSECUTION—the first persecution on a large scale which the Church has witnessed in any shape,” and with unrelenting malignity destroyed the prophets of the Lord, except one hundred, who escaped and were hidden by Obadiah in a cave. “Ahab did more to provoke the Lord to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him.”

NOTE ON BAAL. Baal or Bel is the generic term sig. *master, lord, husband*. Baal of the Phœnicians was undoubtedly the sun. B. was the tutelary god of Tyre; and his worship having had a still more ancient existence at Zidon, extended at last to the distant colonies of Phœnicia. At Gades (Cadiz) the perpetual light was kept burning in his temple. The Egyptians claim that he was one of the primeval gods of their country. So general was the worship of B. among the an. Canaanites, that no less than 13 places in “Palestine bear his name (*ill.* Kirjath-B., B.-gad, B.-Zephon, &c.).” The highest mt was dedicated to B., and called B.-Hermon. Dr Porter found one of his high places on the summit. The worship of B. is supposed to have spread to this country, and *Belfanes* or *Bel-fires* are thought to be a relic of it.

I. **THE PERSECUTORS.** Heathens and apostates. Such are always the most bitter haters of true religion. The intolerance of heathenism. Mistake to suppose that R. Catholics have been the only persecutors. Heathens have been the most violent. Witness the 10 early persecutions of Christianity (Mosheim, i. 36—168). R. Catholics—baptized pagans—persecutors. Protestants have also persecuted in proportion as they have receded from spirituality to mere form and ceremony, i. e. to paganism under another name. To this may be traced the persecutions of Catholics in time of Elizabeth, and of Puritans at a later date. (Mohammedanism, &c.)

II. **THEIR MOTIVE, ETC.** Rivalry of the true worship in Jerusalem. The essence of persecution is found in love of mere form and ceremony, of which much are human inventions, and opposition to that spirit of true worship which is divine. Spirituality in religion takes men away from the region of form, into the realm of light and life, and love. It is therefore opposed to the spirit of persecution. Spiritual men are charitable; lovers of all who love Christ; humble, and therefore would not impose their forms on other souls, nor deem their own understanding of Divine forms infallible. The mere priest, whether Catholic or Protestant, generally a persecutor, in *spirit* if not in *act*, because the embodiment of form. Men will fight for men rather than for God, till they have the Spirit of God, which is a spirit of love.

LEARN—I. Seek spirituality of heart and affection in worship.

II. Pray for all persecutors.

B.C. cir. 910. 1 Ki. xvii. 1—7.

- 1 *Elijah*=my God is Jehovah. . . *Tishbite*, acc. to Job i. 2, there was a town of Naphtali, named *Tishbi*, of which place therefore E. is supposed to have been a native. But as he is said to have been of the inhabitants of Gilead (less. 27, 33, 80, 88, 102), it is difficult to reconcile this. Either there must have been another Tishbe (as *Kitto* asserts) in Gilead; or E. being of Gilead originally, afterwards resided at T. in Naphtali, and hence was called the Tishbite. . . *Ahab* (=father's brother), succ. Omri. K. of Israel 22 years, 918—897 B.C. One of the most wicked characters in Bible history (xvi. 29, 30). . . *I stand*, as his messenger and servant. . . *not dew*, &c. (Lu. iv. 25; Ja. v. 17; Rev. xi. 6). . . *years*, 3 yrs and 6 mo. (xviii. 1). This involved the destruction of all vegetation, on which depended the support of animal life. . . *my word*, of prophecy now, of prayer then.
- 2,3 *word. Lord*, in a vision. . . *Cherith*. There is a little dif. in deciding this river. Dif. arises from unfixed meaning of the word trans. *before*: if it = *east*, then the *C.* would prob.=the Jabbok which flows from the E. into Jordan, S. of Mahanaim (less. 28); but if *before*= *towards*, then the *C.* may be either the Fasil or the Kelt. Van de Veldè favours the F.; and
- 4 Robinson and Stanley (who are prob. correct) the K. . . *ravens*: while the testimony in favour of *ravens* is not to be slighted, there is another and reasonable alternative. (1.) Note the Heb. word here trans. *ravens*—*Orebim*. The *-im* is the pl. term.:—we should write it, *Orebs*. Originally Heb. was written without vowels. They were not introduced till A.D. 600—700. Words of like consonants have a dif. sense acc. to the vowels introduced (*ill. GRN* may be grain, green, groan, or grin). If, therefore, these vowels (which were first inserted some 1600 years after the history was written) happen to be wrong, a very dif. word from *ravens* may be meant. Now there is another word of like consonants which, with other vowels, gives a very dif. sense (see 2 Ch. xvii. 11). "*Arabians*" or Arabs, Heb. *aravim* (v=b). Why then was not *Orebim* written *Aravim* or *Arabim*? It might have been. (2.) Note the circumstances (again see 2 Ch. xvii. 11). In the time of Jehoshaphat, K. of Judah (who was contemp. with Ahab, K. of Israel), *Arabians did* bring large supplies into the country. That they brought *any*, proves a time of dearth. That they brought *so much* makes it likely that it was during some time. They prob. had their encampment and provision depôt on the shores of Jordan. The dates sufficiently coincide, inasmuch as they are uncertain by a year or two either way. It must be remembered, also, that Elijah was one of their countrymen; or, at least, foreign to Israel. He was moreover in exile, a price set on his head by Ahab; and such a man as they would also befriend as the allies of Jehoshaphat. It is also more agreeable with the general method of providence that man should be aided by man. Natural, too, that Elijah should be fed from the same sources of supply as Judah—
- 5,6 the *Arabians*. . . *went. did*. Obedience of faith. . . *morning. evening*. The river Jordan being shallow in this dearth, they could easily bring over to him portions of their morn. and even. meal. These were the usual times for taking food: the principal meal being in the evening (hence Ex. xvi. 7 12). . . *after. while*; *lit.* end of days. . . *dried up*, and he could not venture out of the deep glen (see *anal.*) to the Jordan for water. Indeed he had been told to drink of the brook. . . *rain*, the great fountain-head of all brooks and rivers.

R. B. R. ii. 288. K. D. B. I. iv. 207. T. L. B. 481.

The Instruments and Method of Providence.

NOTE ON THE KELT. "No spot in Palestine is better fitted to afford a secure asylum to the persecuted than this river. On each side of it extend the bare desolate hills of the wilderness of Judea, in whose fastnesses David was able to bid defiance to Saul. The Kelt is one of the wildest ravines in that wild region. In some places it is not less than 500 ft deep, and just wide enough at the bottom to give passage to a streamlet like a thread of silver, and to afford space for its narrow fringe of Oleanders. The banks are almost sheer precipices of naked limestone, and here and there pierced with the dark openings of caves and grottoes, in some one of which probably Elijah lay concealed. The gorge opens into the great valley, and from its depths issues a narrow line of verdure into the white plain; it gradually spreads as it advances till it mingles at the distance of a mile or more with the thickets that encompass Riha, the modern representative of Jericho. To any one passing down from Jerusalem or Samaria towards Jericho, the appropriateness of the words, 'Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith that is before Jordan,' would be at once apparent."

"After traversing for six hours the almost total desolation which marks the long descent from Jerusalem to the valley of the Jordan, over bare limestone hills, the eye is suddenly caught by the sight of a thread of verdure at the bottom of a deep glen, the most romantic in the whole of Palestine. This green thread is the course of the torrent now called Kelt, possibly the ancient Cherith, and, if so, doubtless deriving its name from the manner in which its course is '*cut*' through these tremendous precipices" (*S. S. P.* 305).

- I. WE ARE REMINDED OF THE STRANGE INSTRUMENTS SOMETIMES EMPLOYED BY DIVINE PROVIDENCE. True here, whether Ravens or Arabians. Recalls many others. (Balaam's ass, Jonah's whale, Red Sea, rock in Horeb, quails, &c., &c.) Men have also been often used, both wicked and good men. Events have also been overruled. This dearth brought about the exposure of idolatry on mt Carmel. Human powers, skill, genius, &c., have also been employed or overruled to further the designs of God.
- II. THE UNERRING EXACTITUDE WITH WHICH THE INSTRUMENTS DO THEIR WORK. However involved things may seem to us, they all are parts of a Divine plan. The prophet's purveyors, birds or men, knew not of the command given to Elijah, nor that they were obeying any special power when they provided for his wants. Men do not now know that they are working out any Divine scheme. How much we shall know in the future of these things! How many mysteries will then be explained!

LEARN—

- I. The care that God takes of his servants.
- II. To be thankful for the showers that water the earth.
- III. Rejoice in an overruling Providence, and seek to be helping forward the merciful and righteous will of God.

B.C. cir. 910. 1 Ki. xvii. 8—16.

- 8 *word. Lord came*, by audible voice, or in a vision, or by internal illumination and impression. . . *him*, Elijah. How special the care of his Divine
- 9 master! . . . *Arise*=depart. Having rested and been fed by the bounty of Providence: there is now work to be done. Another—a poor widow—must be cared for by the husband of the widow (Is. liv. 5; Ps. lxxviii. 5). *Zarephath* (smelting-house?), a Phœnician town, ab. midway betw. Tyre and Sidon. Once more named in O. T. (Ob. 20). Called Sarepta in N. T. (Lu. iv. 26). If not the place, it must have been near where our Lord healed the Canaanitish woman's daughter (Mat. xv. 21—28). Modern vil. of *Sarafud* represents the an. Z. Considerable ruins near. It was many miles dist. from the B. Cherith. The road lay through the dominions of the persecuting Ahab. He who gave the command guarded his servant in executing it. . . *Zidon* (less. 84), *commanded*. He had willed it, but had not, as it appears, issued any formal command. . . *widow woman*, who little thought of how much use she would be. Of more service indeed than
- 10 King Ahab. . . *sustain*, nourish. . . *arose*: to hear was to obey. . . *went*, notwithstanding the distance and the danger. . . *gate*, entrance. Nearly all an. cities had walls pierced with gates. Hence the entrance of an un-walled city was called the gate. . . *there*. She went out to gather sticks and returned with the prophet of God. Little thought what would happen when she left home. . . *sticks*: too poor to buy, too friendless to have the help of others. Not unmindful of her duty. . . *little water*, a scarce article
- 11 in the drought. . . *going*. And by her sympathy with the wanderer showing the tenderness of her heart. . . *called*, encouraged by her kindness, and perceiving that she was the widow to whom he was sent. . . *morsel*: a small piece; all he needed, all she could give. . . *of bread*, also scarce and dear.
- 12 *Lord. God*. He was *her* God also. . . *not. cake*, no bread made (less. 18); and little to make bread with. . . *handful*, just enough for one cake. . . *oil*. Olive oil used in the place of butter in the East. [Butter not known in Syria (*T. L. B.* 255, 256). What is called b. in the Bible=curds, or sour milk, &c.] . . *two*, a few. . . *my son*, for whom the prophet would do more than even the kind mother (less. 116). . . *eat. die*, she fully believed
- 13 it would be their last meal. . . *Fear not*. Death is not so near as you think. . . *said*: make the meal into bread. . . *little*, not to satisfy his hunger, so much as to test her faith. . . *first*, leaving the rest of the meal in the barrel. . . *bring. here*: and while she brought it, the meal in the
- 14 barrel increased. . . *saith. Lord*. It is no mere human saying, but the word of thy heavenly Husband. . . *barrel*, which you thought so nearly empty. . . *waste*, never get empty. . . *fail*, lack oil. . . *until. day*, &c. When the great natural storehouse "shall yield its increase" once more.
- 15 *sendeth rain* (Ps. cxlvii. 8, 9). . . *went. did*. Obedience of faith. . . *her house*. Perhaps some others of her family who had neglected her in her poverty, or who were as poor as herself. . . *many days*, or a whole year.
- 16 *wasted not. fail*. Imagine her pious wonder and grateful joy as she beheld this long miracle filling her house with plenty every day!

The Pious Widow—the Faithful Prophet—the Wonderful Miracle.

HISTORICAL NOTE. It was far away that he had to go—beyond the borders of the land of Israel, over the hills of Lebanon, down into the maritime plain, to the spot whence, in Gentile fables, Europa was carried off to give her name and power to the isles of the West. The fresh streams of Lebanon would retain their life-giving power after the scantier springs of Palestine had been dried up. But there, also, the drought had reached. We learn from heathen records, that the famine was long remembered in Phœnicia, and that solemn prayers were offered up in the temples of Astarte by Ethbaal, king of Tyre, for the descent of rain upon the earth. . . The Phœnician mother knew not what great destinies lay in the hand of that gaunt figure at the gate, worn with travel, and famine, and drought. She obeyed only the natural instinct of humanity (?), she listened to his cry, as that of one who was suffering; she saw in him only at most the prophet of a hostile tribe. But she saved in him the deliverer of herself and her son. There was a rebound of unexpected benefits such as sometimes even in the prose of common life equals the poetic justice of an ideal world. It may be that this incident is the basis of the sacred blessing of the Prophet of prophets (Matt. x. 41, 42; *S. J. C.* ii. 297).

- I. **THE PIOUS WIDOW.** Many widows in Israel at that time (Lu. iv. 26), but to this one only was the prophet sent. The widows of Israel had fallen in with the fashion of the times. Having been rejected by Israel, the prophet was sent to the Zidonian. The widow an example of piety in poverty. Piety in adverse circumstances. Idolaters for neighbours. She had little help or sympathy from them. Reduced to the last extremity. About to prepare the last meal for herself and son. Man's extremity, God's opportunity.
 - II. **THE FAITHFUL PROPHET.** Sources of supply at the Cherith cut off. "*Arise!*" Zarephath a long way off. Dangers in the way. A price on his head. An oath taken of the people that they knew not where he was. Only a poor widow to sustain him at the end. She dwelt amid Baal-worshippers, his fierce persecutors. His prompt obedience. Arrival at Z. Meets the widow.
 - III. **THE WONDERFUL MIRACLE.** The barrel and the cruse did not fail. The little lasted long, and increased with God's blessing. The hidden treasure that piety stores up a source of constant supply. Her neighbours might wonder how she was sustained, especially since she had another to provide for; people often wonder how some are supported in cheerfulness and contentment, who know not of the hidden treasure and God's blessing. What was done in that house for the widow is done for us all on a larger scale in nature constantly. The seed corn that is sown is but a mere handful, yet the barrel does not waste. The handful of corn on the tops of the mountains shakes like Lebanon. So also with spiritual life in the world,—there seems very little, but it does not fail.
- LEARN**—I. Trust in the Lord at all times. II. Obey the Lord at all hazards. III. Love him who gives us our daily bread.

B.C. cir. 906. 1 Ki. xvii. 17—24.

- 17 *came.pass*, fell out in the order of Providence. . . *these things*, already narrated, especially those in less. 115. . . *the son*, who seems to have been an only child. Perhaps this illness was in part caused by the drought. . . *sick*, we should say *ill*, but *sick* (adjec.) is more correct than *ill* (adv.). . . *sore, lit.* heavy, severe (A.S. *sár, swær*). . . *no breath*. He was dead, and not merely in a swoon.
- 18 *What.do*. God had shut the heavens up because of the prophet ; through him, for its sins, all the land suffered. She regards this calamity as in consequence of him ; and now demands of him what she has done, to merit this. . . *sin.remembrance*. In her great sorrow she seems to have forgotten how her life had been spared and prolonged. She thinks of some special sin, or of her general sinfulness. . . *slay.son*. God is regarded as a just, rather than a merciful being.
- 19 *Give.son*. He was now past a mother's care. . . *out.bosom*. Where, had only warmth been needful, he had been revived. . . *loft*, an upper room ; not as now, of an outhouse only. A boarded chamber. . . *abode, slept*. . . *laid.bed*. He would be alone with the child and God, that his prayer might not be interrupted.
- 20 *cried*, faith, earnestness, importunity, wrestling. Cried as one who would not be denied. . . *my God*. Happy is he who can call the great Jehovah—"my God." . . *hast.also*. Elijah saw that through him great sorrow was brought upon the whole land ; and now regards *this* private sorrow as *also* connected with himself as a minister of the wrath of God. . . *evil*. Yet the death of children, even an only son, is not necessarily an evil. . . *widow*. Thou art the friend of the widow. . . *sojourn*. At thy command I came hither, and at thy command she received me (sojourn, *lit.* to stay the day. Fr. *séjourner*, from Med. Lat. *journus* = *diurnus*).
- 21 *stretched, lit.* measured. "He threw himself upon the corpse, as if, in the vehement energy of his, to force his own life into it ; and he cried, with mighty and resistless energy, to God, to send back to this cold frame the breath he had taken" (*Kitto*). . . *three times*, agony of importunity. Would not be denied.
- 22 *soul*, breath of life. . . *heard*, answered. . . *voice*, prayer. . . *Elijah*, his obedient and believing servant. . . *revived*, lived again.
- 23 *Elijah*. "Faith conquered. It was *adequate*, and therefore irresistible. The fleeting soul was arrested in mid-career, and sent back to its earthly house" (*Kitto*). . . *took.child*. Now living, from the couch, and the chamber. . . *his mother*, who had been meanwhile in an agony of suspense, hope, and fear : catching perhaps between her sighs the distant sounds of the prophet's wonderful prayer. . . *See*, and when thou seest believe. . . *liveth*. The first time such a thing was heard of or known, since the world began (Heb. xi. 35 ; com. 2 Ki. iv. 35).
- 24 *woman*, full of wonder, joy, gratitude. . . *by this*, more clearly than she knew it before. The miracle of the meal and oil must have reminded her of it daily. No less a miracle to *keep life in* than now to *bring life back*.

The Dead Child—the Mighty Prayer—the Rejoicing Mother.

“Behold this great man in his chamber, alone with the corpse of that fair child. See how vehemently he strides up and down, gradually working himself up to the height of the great demand which gleams before his thought. Hear him. He ventures to expostulate, humbly indeed, but with some soreness of feeling, natural enough—only too natural—to one who began to think that afflictions attended him wherever he went. Trouble he could bear, so that it came upon himself alone; but it was hard to feel that his presence brought nothing but misery to those who befriended him most. This thought was hard to bear. Again he lashes himself up to his great purpose, which had not crossed the mind of man since the beginning of the world, only because no man before had had the same degree of faith—the faith to deem it possible that the dead might be restored to life at man’s earnest prayer. It is done. His purpose is taken. The child may live. Nothing is too hard for the Lord. It is as easy for Him to give back life as to take it, and He will do this if asked with adequate faith. E. knew that men too often expect to move the mountains by such faith as suffices not to shake the mole-hills; and that because, from the insufficiency of the means, the hoped-for results do not follow, the power of faith is disparaged. But he felt the true mountain-moving faith heaving strong within him, and he gave it unrestrained vent. He threw, &c. (See on v. 21; *K. D. B. I.* iv. 222.)

- I. THE DEAD CHILD. (1.) An *only* child. The greater treasure. (2.) Of a *widow*. Her comforts in life few. This her chief one. She looked for the time when he would be strong enough to support her. (3.) The *sick* child. Carefully nursed. In her bosom. Could not bear him out of her arms or sight. (4.) The *dead* child. End of her hope. Outburst of sorrow.
 - II. THE MIGHTY PRAYER. Elijah takes the child. Does not say what he will do. His own heart full of sorrow for the widow. Lays the body on his bed. Prays to God. The God of the living. Had no precedent for this. Yet he prayed on. Resolved to be heard and answered. The child revived.
 - III. THE REJOICING MOTHER. “Now I know.” It seemed to her that the rest was as nothing to this blessing. Some joys overtop all others. Many gifts, yet one *unspeakable*. He crowneth the year with loving-kindness, &c., but the one “crowning mercy” of all is salvation. All things as loss compared with this great gain. It was once a great thing for her to have her “*meal*” increased, but this is so wonderful that she forgets the other. Are we waiting for some greater blessing to prove the goodness of God? “God commendeth his love towards us,” &c.
- LEARN—I. Let children prepare for heaven. Long life is not certain. Preparation for heaven the best preparation for life. II. Whatever ye ask believing, &c. He that cometh to God must believe, &c.
- III. Have we not all had enough of mercy to prove the goodness and mercy of God. IV. From that mother’s joy let children learn to love their parents.

B.C. 906. 1 Ki. xviii. 17—40.

- 17 *came pass*, at the close of the 3 yrs and 6 mo. (Lu. iv. 25; Jas. v. 17). . . *Ahab* (less. 114). . . *thou, &c. ?* Not unfrequently the case that those who
- 18 are the source of great calamities imagine the cause is with others. . . *And he*, replied with a boldness that must have greatly surprised the proud king. *but thou*, by supporting idolatry; and persecuting the true teachers. . . *father's house*. Omri (xvi. 25, 26). . . *in that*, in this way ye have troubled, &c. Not foreign wars nor oppressive taxes could so much trouble a people as turning them from God. . . *Baalim*, Baal for God, and false
- 19 prophets for the true. . . *Now*, let the great religious controversy be publicly settled. . . *mount Carmel* (= garden). Ridge of hills, of which highest is 1723 ft. *Com.* with bold headland 10 m. S. of Acre, and dividing pl. of Sharon from Esdraelon (*T. L. B.* 484). . . *Baal* (= Lord). Supreme God of Canaanitish nations. Kitto says:—or, Baal=the sun. . . *prophets*, priests. . . *groves*, idols. . . *four hundred*. These priests of Astarte, the Zidonian goddess, did not come (*com. vv.* 22, 40). . . *eat table*, not royal
- 21 table, but kitchen establishment. . . *Elijah came*. He alone to represent the true God. . . *people*, their principal men. . . *halt*, hesitate. . . *two*. They cannot be both true, and cannot therefore be united (2 Cor. vi. 15). . . *not*.
- 22 *word*. They saw the reasonableness of this. . . *I only*. *four hundred and fifty*.
- 23 To-day it shall be shown that the truth lies not with the majority. . . *Let them*. He proposes the terms of the trial. . . *give us*, which they were well able to do. . . *choose*, leaving him the one least suited for the purpose, as
- 24 they think. . . *gods*, 450 to call, and many gods to hear. . . *I*, only one. . . *Lord*, the one true God. . . *answereth fire*, sending fire to consume the
- 25 sacrifice. . . *well spoken*, fair, honest, we will abide by it. . . *dress*, prepare it, and the altar, &c. . . *first*, that you may have time for all your incantations. . . *many*, and each will have enough to do. . . *until noon*, courses of
- 26 priests succeeding each other (Mat. vi. 7). . . *hear us*, Heb. answer us. . .
- 27 *voice*, no audible response. . . *answered*, by sending fire. . . *Elijah*, who had been calmly looking on. . . *mocked*, poured sublime contempt upon them. . . *aloud*, Heb. with a great voice. . . *for god*, ironical. . . *either*. Many heathen fables describe the gods as thus employed. . . *talking*,
- 28 meditating. . . *pursuing*, occupied with business. . . *aloud*, maddened by Elijah, and desperate through exposure. . . *cut* (Le. xix. 28; De. xiv. 1;
- 29, 30 Mi. vi. 7). . . *prophesied*, acted as prophets or priests. . . *Elijah*. Whose turn it now was. . . *Come near*, he invited close inspection. . . *altar* (see
- 31 *anal.*). Prob. built in time of Judges. . . *twelve stones*. Calling upon Jehovah, as the God of the patriarchs. The controversy concerned all, as
- 32, 33 well as the 10 revolted tribes. . . *measures*=150 gals. . . *water*, from the well close by. . . *pour wood*. None should say there was concealed fire.
- 34, 35 *third time*, till all was saturated. . . *ran filled*, soaked the wood and
- 36 filled the trenches. . . *evening* (Ex. xxix. 39—41; Ez. ix. 4, 5). . . *be known*, by indisputable evidence. . . *thou God*. They already knew that
- 37 Baal was not God. . . *thy word*, and not of my own notion. . . *heart back*, to Thyself, and away from Baal. . . *Then*. When he had so prayed, immediately. . . *fell*, from heaven. . . *consumed, &c.* So intense was the
- 39 sheet of flame, the water could not extinguish it (Heb. xii. 29). . . *saw*. The descending fire and leaping flames would be very visible in the twilight to all the people gathered on and about that hill. . . *fell faces*, overwhelmed with fear and awe. . . *and said*. They now confessed what they had before
- 40 halted about. . . *Take*, apprehend, seize. . . *not escape*, as an evil seed.

The Gathering—the Trial—the Result.

“Carmel was the peculiar haunt of Elijah. On its eastern summit, commanding the last view of the Mediterranean Sea, and the first view of the great plain of Esdraelon, just where the glades of forest—the ‘excellency,’ whence it derives its name—sink into the usual bareness of the hills of Manasseh, a rock is still shown bearing the name of Maharrakah—‘the sacrifice.’ On this rock stood an altar of Jehovah (*v.* 30), which had, in all probability, been destroyed in the recent persecution. On this same spot, probably, long afterwards, Vespasian * sacrificed, when commanding the Roman armies in Palestine, and to this the Druzes still come in yearly pilgrimage. Close beneath, in an upland plain, round a well of perennial water, which, from its shady and elevated situation, seems to have escaped the effect of the drought, were ranged on the one side the king and people, with the 450 prophets of Baal dressed in their splendid vestments (2 Ki. x. 22); and on the other side the one solitary figure of the Prophet of the Lord, in his rough sheepskin cloak. In the distance, and on its commanding position, overlooking the whole valley, rose the stately city of Jezreel, with Ahab’s palace and Jezebel’s temple embosomed in its sacred grove. Immediately under their feet spread far and wide that noble plain, the battle-field of sacred history, the plain of Megiddo or Jezreel; with the torrent Kishon, passing, as its name implies, in countless windings, through the level valley; that ‘ancient stream,’ on whose banks had perished the host of Sisera, and the host of Midian, before the army of Deborah and Barak, before the sword of the Lord and of Gideon. In such a scene, with such recollections of the past, were the people of Israel gathered for a conflict as momentous as any which had taken place in the plain beneath” (*S. J. C.* ii. 300, 301).

- I. THE GATHERING. (1.) *On the side of Baal.* (a.) King and nobles. (b.) The priests 450 in number. (c.) The people. (2.) *On the side of God.* One man. Elijah.
- II. THE TRIAL. (1.) *Commenced by the priests.* They slay the bullock. Arrange it. Wood, but *no* water. Their long and repeated prayer. Vain repetitions. The afternoon. All wearied. King, &c., astonished. (2.) *Continued by Elijah.* Time of evening sacrifice. The twelve stones. Sacrifice made ready. The water. His prayer.
- III. THE RESULT. The descending fire. Water dried up. Sacrifice consumed. The shout of the people. Dismay of the priests. Sentence of Elijah. The priests slain.

LEARN—

- I. Truth not always on the side of numbers, wealth, &c.
- II. The consciously right are bold. How courageous should those on the side of Jesus be.
- III. He, who is for us, more than all that can be against.
-

* Tacitus, *Hist.* ii. 78. Suetonius, *Vespasian*, v.

B.C. 906. 1 Ki. xix. 1—21.

- 1 *Ahab*, after witnessing the wonders of Carmel, and the death of the prophets of Baal. . . *told Jezebel*. Imagine the scene. His fear and her rage. *Elijah done*. It was not God, then, who had done all this!! . . *he slain*. How could this one man have done this had not the people assisted? Ahab
- 2 seems not to have said much of the change in popular opinion. . . *sent*, in her blind fury sending a threat rather than the sword. . . *as one*, the man who had been the occasion of the death of 450, and who had done what
- 3 they combined could not do, is regarded as=to one of them! . . *for life*, to save it. . . *Beer-sheba* (less. 18, 25). . . *Judah*, beyond the jurisdiction of Ahab. . . *servant*. The Jews say this was Jonah, the son of the widow of
- 4 Z. . . *juniper* (see anal.). . . *that die*, so soon grown weary of what he had so lately been anxious to save. He was subject to like passions as we are (Jas. v. 17), and was now overcome by weariness, sorrow, &c. . . *not*.
- 5,6 *better*, of more service to man or God. . . *angel*, in a vision. . . *cake*. *coals* (less. 18). Word *coals* des. the kind of bread; does not mean that the fire was there. . . *cruse*, a vessel of earthenware, or a gourd, or skin-bottle with narrow neck. The Heb. name is from the gurgling sound of the liquid in leaving it. . . *down again*, still exhausted, but now uncomplaining. . .
- 7,8 *journey great*, that is still before thee. . . *forty days nights*. Relate other cases. [*Moses* Ex. xxiv. 18; xxxiv. 28; De. ix. 9, 18; *Christ*, Mat. iv. 2; Mar. i. 13; Lu. iv. 2.] God could both supernaturally *give*, and *endow*, food. . . *mount God*, so called from the old associations of the place
- 9 (Ex. iii. 1; xix. 18; Mal. iv. 4, 5; less. 51). . . *word came*, in vision, or supernatural illumination. . . *What here*. Whither God had not sent
- 10 him, but his own fears, &c. . . *I only*. So he thought (but see v. 18; Rom. xi. 4); neither wisdom nor piety will die with us. . . *Go forth*, out of the cave. . . *passed by*, in giving plain signs and lessons. He still passes by in events, lessons, sermons, &c. . . *strong wind*, a furious hurricane. . .
- 12 *earthquake*, trembling of solid ground. . . *fire*, strangely kindled. . . *still*. *voice*, and E. was God's voice amid the storm of persecution and idolatry. To E. the voice was still and small, and he was a mere nobody, yet he was
- 13 mighty, because God was with him, i.e. the voice. . . *wrapped face*, in fear and reverence. . . *went out*. These events occurring as he was going (v. 11). . . *What here?* In that wilderness he could do nothing for God.
- 14 Had therefore no right to be there. . . *he said*: made the same reply as before, no answer to the question. Told only the reason of his coming, not
- 15 what he was doing. . . *Hazael*. Prob. not anointed, but simply designated
- 16 (less. 128). . . *Jehu* (2 Ki. ix. 1—14). . . *Elisha* (=God his salvation).
- 17 *Shaphat* (=judge). . . *Abel-meholah** (Jud. vii. 22). . . *Hazael Jehu Elisha*. Of the three commissions Elijah executed one:—the call of Elisha, by whom Elihu was anointed. These three were in dif. ways great destroyers
- 18 of idolatry. . . *seven thousand*. Elijah thought he was the only one. . .
- 19 *Elisha plowing*. At his proper work when called. So Moses, &c., &c. . . *east mantle*, sign he would inherit the office of him to whom it belonged.
- 20 *father mother* (Mat. viii. 21, 22; Lu. ix. 61, 62; Ac. xx. 37). . . *Go for*
- 21 *what*. Go, but remember what I have done. . . *people eat*, a farewell banquet hastily prepared (2 Sam. xxiv. 22). Henceforth Elisha becomes the servant of Elijah till his death, and then succeeds him as the prophet of Israel.

* =Meadow of dancing. S. J. C. ii. 306—311.

The Fugitive Prophet—the Divine Sign.

NOTE ON THE JUNIPER. Heb. *Rothem* (Job xxx. 4; Ps. cxx. 4). Not the true juniper, but a broom. The juniper (*Juniperus*) belongs to the *Coniferæ* = cone-bearers: the broom (*Genista*) to the *Leguminiferæ* = pod-bearers. The species under which E. rested was the one-seeded broom (*Genista monosperma*), still called *Rethem* or *Ritt'm* by the Arabs. Grows in Palestine, desert of Sinai, &c. Dr Bonar met with it in *Wady-esh-Sheikh*. He says, "It was under this tree that E. sat down to take shelter from the heat, and more than once did we do the same, for some of these shrubs are bushy and tall, per. 8 or 10 ft high." Dr Stanley met with it in *Wady Seyal*, and speaks of taking shelter during a shower under a *Retem* or broom (*S. S. P.* 80). So also Dr Robinson (*R. B. R.* ii. 302). Dr Thompson, who seems to have overlooked the Hebrew word, takes a different view, and describes the true juniper (*T. L. B.* 610, 611), but see *D. B. N. S.* ii. 299, 300.

- I. THE FUGITIVE PROPHET. Elijah. Intended only to fly from Jezebel, but at the same time ran away from work and duty. A great man's mistake. God compassionate. Supplies him with strengthening food, and afterwards with instruction. Teaching us to be indulgent of the errors of the great and good. A bad life one great error. A good life not to be judged of by one mistake. If so, where should we be in the judgment of men? Neither the juniper tree nor the cave could hide E. from God.
- II. THE DIVINE SIGN. E. in the cave. The voice. "What doest thou here?" Come forth. E. thought that nothing could benefit the country but some *great* thing. A multitude of preachers, or some great judgment. God would teach him the power of humble and despised instruments. The still small voice greater, if God wills it, than the storm, the earthquake, or the fire. They in succession pass before him, and God is not in them.

"The storm is o'er, and, hark! a still small voice
Steals on the ear, to say, Jehovah's choice
Is ever with the soft, meek, tender soul:
By soft, meek, tender ways He loves to draw
The sinner, startled by His ways of awe:
Here is our Lord, and not where thunders roll."—(*Keble.*)

The still small voice may *ill.* (a.) Elijah in Israel. (b.) Jesus in the world (Isa. xlii. 2, 3; Matt. xii. 19, 20). (c.) The spirit of God in the soul. (d.) The voice of conscience.

LEARN—

- I. Not to shrink from duty, however great the dangers in the way.
- II. Not to look for the Divine presence only in great events.
- III. Not to despise little things.

B.C. 899. 1 Kings xxi. 1—24.

- 1 *Naboth* (=fruit). . . *Jezreelite*, inhabitant of Jezreel. . . *hard by* (Ps.
- 2 lxiii. 8; Ac. xviii. 7), close to. . . *Give*, sell or exchange. His request seemed fair, but it was forbidden (Lev. xxv. 14—28) to alienate property
- 3 thus. . . *Lord forbid*. N. had a greater regard for law of God than his own personal advantage. . . *inheritance fathers*, which, together with the law,
- 4 would make it priceless in his sight. . . *heavy displeased*, that one of his subjects should think more of law of God than the king's wish. . . *bed bread* : poor king. [Alexander wept because there was no other world for him to
- 5,6 conquer.] . . *Jezebel*, a human tigress, with fiendish ingenuity. . . *he said*,
- 7 relating the matter that had mortified his kingly pride. . . *Dost govern*. Call you this being a king, and canst not do as thou wilt? . . . *be merry*.
- 8 I have a scheme. . . *I give*, if Naboth will not. . . *she wrote*. She seems to have had more power in many things than her weak and wicked hus-
- 9 band. . . *his seal*, as though they came from him. . . *Proclaim a fast*, as if some heavy guilt lay on the city. . . *on high*, give him a foremost place.
- 10 *two men*, the lawful number of witnesses. . . *sons. Belial*, men of whom she was sure, as well she might be. A wicked man was proverbially called a son of Belial (Deut. xiii. 13; Jud. xix. 22; 1 Sam. ii. 12; xxv. 27; 2 Cor. vi. 15). . . *witness*, falsely. . . *blaspheme*, a criminal charge, follow-
- 11 ed, if guilty, by capital punishment. . . *elders*, who ought to have known better. . . *nobles*, who ought to have resisted. . . *did*, their conscience stupified by fear of Jezebel. . . *his city*, and per. a little moved by envy
- 12,13 of his prosperity. . . *fast*. It was done in the name of religion. . . *against*
- 14 *him* : convenient men, who would witness anything. . . *sent* : when, in the
- 15 name of religion and law, the crime was finished. . . *not alive. dead*. Ahab
- 16 could hardly have been ignorant of these proceedings. . . *rose up*, full of joy. And *Another* also rose up (v. 18). . . *possession*, the enjoyment of it
- 17 another thing. . . *to Elijah*, who was not so useless as he thought (less.
- 18 118). . . *in vineyard*, looking at his new property, and planning his gar-
- 19 den of herbs. Wormwood, the chief plant, already growing there. . . *in place*=in like manner as, the people shall associate thy death with that of Naboth, and with the justice of God. . . *dogs*, unclean animals. . .
- 20 *found* : God had found him. . . *enemy*. Ahab was the enemy of God
- 21,22 and Elijah. . . *posterity* (2 Ki. ix. 7—9). . . *made*, compelled by example and force. . . *Israel. sin*, forced the nation into idolatrous usages.
- 23,24 *wall. Jezreel*, the city of Naboth (2 Ki. ix. 30). . . *of Ahab*, his adher-
- 25 ents and partners in crime. . . *sell himself*. Allowed sin to have the complete mastery (2 Ki. xvii. 17; Rom. vii. 11). . . *stirred up*. He allowed
- 26 himself to be easily stirred. . . *Amorites*, who were punished for the very
- 27 same thing (Gen. xv. 16). . . *rent clothes*, late repentance. Rather remorse than penitence. Dreading the consequences, more than abhorring the nature of his crime. . . *went softly*, being barefoot, he made no noise. Token of
- 28 humility. . . *to Elijah*. He shall learn that his preaching has not been in
- 29 vain. . . *humbleth*. Even such repentance God in mercy accepted, and deferred the punishment.

The Mortified King—the Malicious Queen—the Ill-fated Naboth.

THE VINE AND VINEYARDS. The *vine* (*vitis vinifera*) first spoken of in hist. of Noah (Gen. ix. 20), cultivated in Egypt (xl. 9—11; Nu. xx. 5), flourished in Palestine (xiii. 23, 24). A bunch of the Syrian variety grown at Welbeck weighed $19\frac{1}{2}$ lbs., length $19\frac{3}{4}$ in., breadth $19\frac{1}{2}$ in. (see *S. S. P.* 163, 164). *Vineyard* fenced off, to exclude wild animals (Num. xxii. 24; Ps. lxxx. 12, 13; Cant. ii. 15). Sunny aspect desired, hence a hill (Isa. v. 1); lodge in it for dresser (v. 2; Matt. xxi. 33). Vintage in Sept. a joyous season (Jud. ix. 27; Isa. xvi. 10; Jer. vi. 9; xxv. 30). Gleanings left for poor (De. xxiv. 21; Jer. xlix. 9). Produce variously used. Grapes eaten fresh or dried (1 Sam. xxx. 12). A kind of syrup is also made of juice of grape, boiled down to third or half-part, this called *honey* in Gen. xliii. 11, and still in use in Palestine (*R. B. R.* ii. 80, 81).

- I. THE MORTIFIED KING. Mortified that there was found *one* man to oppose his wish. He could not respect the motive of Naboth. Not disloyal to the king, but more loyal to God. Hard to part with the patrimonial estate. Attachment to such spots natural (*ill.* Warren Hastings and Daylesford, *Macaulay's Essays*, vol. ii. 182, pop. ed.). Ahab's pride of more consequence than the garden of herbs.

"Stranger, be warned, and know that pride,
Howe'er disguised in its own majesty,
Is littleness."—(*Wordsworth.*)

- II. THE MALICIOUS QUEEN. What may not 'might *v.* right' accomplish? An illustration of the evil of absolute power. No check to envy, malice, &c. Even the best men imperfect. The unwomanliness of this woman, Jezebel. Even her affection for her husband was merged in her thirst for power. Who was Naboth, and what his rights when they stood in the way of a royal wish? She did not regard a king as made for other men—the nation; but the whole nation as made for him. Israel's neck a footstool for Ahab. Her letter. Imagine her writing it.
- III. THE ILL-FATED NABOTH. No hope for him. One man against Jezebel. Yet who would not rather be N. than the king and queen? The one pitied, the other execrated by all posterity. His death compassed in the name of religion and with the form of law. Might not N. say of *religion*, as long after (1793) another (Madame Roland) did, of *liberty*, "Alas! how many crimes are committed in thy name?"
- LEARN—
- I. To guard against pride, envy, and all uncharitableness.
- II. To respect the rights and liberties of others.
- III. To love Him who, though rich, became poor for us.

B.C. 896. 2 Kings ii. 1—17.

- 1 *when*, his course being run, and his great life-work finished. . . *into heaven*, the reward of the righteous, and place of rest. . . *whirlwind*. He should be wafted away suddenly, as if by that means. . . *Elijah*, knowing what should happen. . . *Elisha*, his minister and successor. . . *Gilgal* (less. 83, 86).
Beth-el, house of God. He was on his way to another house of God. . . *not leave*. Besides being devoted to his person, he probably saw something unusual in his manner. And also knew that the end of the great prophet was near.
- 3 *sons. prophets*, a school of prophets founded by Elijah, yet Beth-el was one of the head-quarters of the calf-worship. . . *Knowest thou*. How did they know? from Elijah, and by revelation of God? . . . *hold. peace*. It is too serious a matter to be much talked about.
- 4 *tarry here*. He wished to be alone. This *last* the most solemn day of his life, as it is of every life.
- 5 *prophets. Jericho*, another school founded by Elijah at another head-quarters of the calf-worship. . . *thou*, they also knew. . . *hold. peace*. Elijah seems to have said nothing to Elisha about it, hence Elisha would not have it talked about.
- 6 *sent me*, he would go wherever he was sent. We shall all desire to be obedient some day. Are we so now? . . . *they two*, and *One*, unseen by either, but served by both.
- 7 *fifty*. The schools must have been large. Provision for the future instruction of the people. . . *by Jordan*, where one day we shall have to stand.
- 8 *mantle*, of sheep skin (i. 8). . . *divided*, as they were once before. When? (Josh. iii. 14—17.)
- 9 *gone over*. This was very near the native land of Elijah (1 Ki. xvii. 1). . . *taken away*. He knew now that the time had come. . . *double. spirit*, of thy spiritual power.
- 10 *hard thing*, for who could have more of that power than Elijah? . . . *see. me*, and so be in a waiting, expecting attitude of soul.
- 11 *talked*, of such things. . . *chariot. horses. fire*, i.e. of the most resplendent glory, which manifesting itself in coruscations or shooting rays, seemed to be like blazing fire, or the sun in his strength. . . *went up*, not lost, but gone before.
- 12 *father. chariot*. Yes, Elijah was the true chariot, &c., of Israel. Good men are the strength of the land. . . *no more*, in this world. . . *rent them*, sign of deep sorrow.
- 13 *took. mantle*, all the personal property the great prophet left behind.
- 14 *Where, &c.* The question was soon answered. . . *they parted*, proving that the God of Elijah was with Elisha, as his successor. . . *went over*, to the scene of his labours.
- 15 *saw him*, and the miracle he had just wrought.
- 16 *cast. valley*. They had no idea of his being translated; and wished to bury him. . . *not send*. Elisha knew what had happened.
- 17 *found not*, no, nor ever would in this world. He was found of other men on the brow of another hill (Matt. xvii. 1—13; C. D. N. T. 98) nearly 1000 years after, with *one* who had passed away 500 years before, and a *third*, who ever liveth, and is greater than both Moses and Elias. "HEAR HIM."

The Triumphal Chariot—the Astonished Witness.

“So he now seemed, when he passed away, lost in the flames of the steeds and the car that swept him from the earth, as in the fire of his own unquenchable spirit, in the fire which had thrice blazed around him in his passage through his troubled earthly career. During the whole of his course ‘he rose up as a fire, and his word blazed as a torch.’ And as in its fiery force and energy, so in its mystery, the end corresponded to the beginning. He had appeared in the history, we know not whence, and now he is gone in like manner. . . . On some lonely peak, or in some deep ravine, the sons of the prophets vainly hoped to find him, cast away by the breath of the Lord, as in former times. . . . He was gone, no more to be seen by mortal eyes; or, if ever again, only in far distant ages, when his earthly likeness should once again appear (Matt. iii. 4, 5; xi. 14; xvii. 11, 13) in that same sacred region, or when, on the summit of ‘a high mountain apart by themselves,’ three disciples, like Elisha, should be gathered round a Master whose departure they were soon expecting” (*S. J. C.* ii. 322).

I. THE TRIUMPHAL CHARIOT. “The ascension of Elijah stands out alone in the Jewish history as the highest representation of the end of a great and good career; of death as seen under its noblest aspect, as the completion and crown of the life which had preceded it, as the mysterious shrouding of the departed within the invisible world. By a sudden stroke of storm and whirlwind, or, as we may almost literally say of the martyrs of old, by chariots and horses of fire, the servants of God pass away. We know not where they rest; we may search high and low, in the height of the highest peak of our speculations, or in the depth of the darkest valley of the shadow of death” (*Stanley*).

II. THE ASTONISHED WITNESS. Elisha. May we receive a double portion of the spirit that made the glorified departed so good, and great, and powerful:—

. “As he, whose wrongs
The bears avenged, at its departure saw
Elijah’s chariot, when the steeds erect
Raised their steep flight for heaven; his eyes meanwhile
Straining pursued them, till the flame alone,
Upsoaring like a misty speck, he kenn’d.”—(*Dante, Inferno, xxvi. 35.*)

Name another who “was translated that he should not see death” (Gen. vi. 24; Heb. xi. 5). Entering heaven without dissolution, a hint of the resurrection of the body, and a proof of what had been possible, had not “sin entered the world, and death by sin.”

LEARN—

- I. Servants of God the true defence of nations.
- II. Seek to possess a DOUBLE measure of their spirit.
- III. Let the mind that was in Christ be in you.

B.C. 896. 2 Kings ii. 19—25.

- 19 *the men*, probably some who were connected with the school of the prophets. They respectfully recognized Elisha as successor of Elijah. . . *of the city*, Jericho (v. 18). Here he had waited the return of those who for three days sought the body of the translated prophet. . . *situation*, about 5 miles from the Jordau, and 18 from Jerusalem. . . *pleasant*, "city of palms." "At this period the environs of J. must have been exceedingly rich and beautiful. The abundant waters of Elisha's fountain, and of other larger fountains northward, were conducted by aqueducts and canals, and distributed far and wide over the vast plain. The gardens and orchards abounded in spices, shrubs, and fruit trees of the rarest kinds, and were dotted besides with the palaces of the Jewish princes and nobles" (Porter). *water*, of a fountain now called the '*Ain-es-Sultân*, which, there is no doubt, is the fountain healed by Elisha, while the ruins around it are those of the ancient Jericho (*T. L. B.* 613—617). . . *barren*, Heb.=causing to miscarry.
- 20 *cruse* (less. 118). . . *salt*, the very thing that *naturally* would seem to spoil the waters. [*Jo.* ix. 6, 15, clay would be more likely to increase blindness than give sight. The cure, not in the salt or the clay.]
- 21 *spring*, fountain-head. . . *saith*, *Lord*, not Elisha. . . *I*, the Lord. . . *healed*, cured, restored. . . *thence*, that fountain. . . *any more*, for all time. To this day it swarms with small fish, and the waters are very pure.
- 22 *this day*, and to *this day* also.
- 23 *up* (*Mar.* x. 32). The ground rises towards Jerusalem. "The descent from mount Olivet is rapid, being a fall of 3500 or 4000 feet" (*A. Rhodes, U. S. Consul at Jerusalem*). . . *Beth-el*, where was another school of the prophets (less. 120). . . *by way*, out of Beth-el. . . *little children*. The Heb. = not only *little*, but *young*, as opp. to *old*. Hence they might be young men. The same word is applied to Isaac when he was 28, to Joseph at 39, and to Rehoboam at 40. . . *mocked*. "These idolatrous young men, having heard of the ascension of Elijah, without believing it, blasphemously bade Elisha follow him" (*Marg. Comp. Bib., Bagster*). . . *go up*, ironically. Go up after Elijah. . . *bald head*. It was natural baldness, and so uncommon among the Israelites as to provoke derision; but they probably implied that Elisha was a leper (*Lev.* xiii. 40—43). Sometimes the head was shaven as a sign of mourning* and degradation (*Isa.* iii. 24; *xv.* 2; *Jer.* xlvii. 5).
- 24 *looked*, in pity, and scorn of their imputations; and seeing they were of an age to know better. . . *cursed*, by a Divine impulse. . . *of Lord*. The curse would have had no effect had not God approved it. . . *she bears*. Of all, the most ravenous (2 *Sam.* xvii. 8; *Prov.* xvii. 12). The Syrian bear (*Ursus Syriacus*) similar to common brown bears, but lower and longer. Colour, dull buff, clouded with darker brown. Ridge of long hair from neck to tail. Still found in parts of Lebanon. . . *forty-two*. They being paralyzed with fear, and the bears being endowed with extraordinary ferocity.
- 25 *thence*, Bethel. . . *Carmel* (less. 117). . . *returned*, geographical accuracy. *Samaria*, the home of Ahab and Jezebel. How bold was Elisha. He indeed seems to have had a double measure of the spirit of Elijah (less. 117). (See also 2 *Ki.* viii. 1—6.)

* *S. J. C.* ii. 324. *K. D. B. I.* iv. 277. *D. B. N. S.* ii. 261. *T. L. B.* 573. *S. S. P.* 121, 205.

Defective Good—Wonderful Cure—Ungodly Rabble—Terrible Curse—
Awful Judgment.

- I. DEFECTIVE GOOD. Beautiful city, bad water. Good things of life often negated by the presence of evil. A crook in every lot (*ill. personal beauty* often marred by evil temper, vanity, &c. Absalom. *Reputation for wisdom* by little folly. *Family harmony* by some careless or wicked member. *Ordinary good sense or piety* by crotchets, weaknesses, &c. Blemishes of character, &c. Scholars are often thus spoiled by some evil thing). This one defect spoiled the entire city. Affected every inhabitant.
- II. THE WONDERFUL CURE. Naturally one might think that salt would make the water worse. Not the salt that restored the water, but the blessing of God. Men may not see how means of Divine appointment operate. Christians are the salt of earth. Though defective, by their means God will bless the world. Bitter waters of strife, &c., tend to spoil, but thus shall the waters be sweetened. It was speedily performed. It had long been a great trial, it was now immediately a blessing.
- III. THE UNGODLY RABBLE. As usual in such cases, had nothing to say in way of argument. Dealt in blasphemy and ridicule. Thought it fine sport to revile a prophet. Cowards, many against one. They had mistaken his character, and underrated his power. Those who deride the servants of God forget who is on their side. World's blindness to the resources of the Church. Learn to adore the mercy of God, who has not on many occasions punished evil-doers.
- IV. THE TERRIBLE CURSE. He did not return railing for railing. Would not have pronounced this curse but by Divine direction. These Baal-worshippers rejected the idea of the translation of Elijah. Not mere mockery on their part, but ribald blasphemy. The curse was a punishment for their unbelief and idolatry. A terror to evil-doers. The rest might see that Elisha had power to compete with all such. This act proves his great forbearance in other cases. 42 were slain, but how many of the tribe were spared?
- V. THE AWFUL JUDGMENT. They did not think of the bears. Scoffers never think of the danger to which they expose themselves. Not bears in all lands, but instruments of punishment in every place. Scoffers not always punished immediately, but heap up wrath against the day of wrath. If mercifully spared for the present, that they may repent, there is the wrath to come.

LEARN—

- I. Not to rest in any creature good.
- II. God can cure the evils that afflict us. Sweeten our tears of sorrow, &c.
- III. Avoid profanity, and not ridicule what we cannot understand.
- IV. Stand in awe, and sin not.
- V. Repent of all sin, for its wages is death.

 B.C. 894. 2 Ki. iv. 1—7.

- 1 *cried*, prayed, besought. In an agony of grief, having lost her husband, possessed of no property, her sons are about to be taken from her, when her poverty will be the more extreme and helpless. . . *woman*, now a widow, and cared for by the heavenly Husband of the widow (Ps. lxxviii. 5; Jer. xlix. 11; Jas. i. 27). . . *sons*. *prophets*, who in that idolatrous age were poorly provided for. . . *my husband*, my earthly support. . . *fear*. *Lord*, and still had his worldly difficulties. . . *creditor*, who, had her husband lived, would have been easily paid. . . *is come*. The strict law allows it (Mat. xviii. 25), but mercy would have suggested in this case another course (Ex. xxii. 22; Job xxiv. 21; Is. ix. 17; x. 2; Mat. iii. 5; Mat. xxiii. 14). Perhaps this creditor was an idolater, and took the greater pleasure in oppressing the widow of a prophet. . . *two sons* (upon whom I now depend for support), to work out the debt. . . *bondmen*, till the year of release.
- 2 *What do?* He could not repeal the law, nor enforce mercy. . . *in house*. She supposing that he meant "anything that be given for thy debt." . . *pot*, a cruse (less. 118). . . *oil* (less. 118).
- 3 *he said*, at once resolving what to do. The law must take its course, no mercy to be expected, the debt must not be disputed. . . *borrow*. She must have been known as a woman who would return what she borrowed. *vessels*, of all sorts and sizes. . . *all neighbours*. Not to cease at any short of *all*. . . *empty*, which were both what he needed, and they would willingly lend. . . *not few*. Not to think she had enough till she could get no more.
- 4 *come in*, having ended thy borrowing, thy neighbours having no more to lend. . . *shut door*, of thy house, lest thy neighbours, crowding in to see what the vessels are needed for, see the miracle, and either persecute thee as one having a familiar spirit, or seek like aid from me. Miracles may not be needlessly multiplied. They must not supersede proper labour and thought. . . *pour out*, of thy cruse. . . *into all*: for there shall be enough for all. . . *set aside*, the vessels.
- 5 *went him*, doing as she was told, nothing doubting. . . *to her*, as she filled them one by one. . . *she*. It was for the *widow's* sake this miracle was wrought.
- 6 *she said*, her wonder, faith, and gratitude increasing. . . *Bring yet*. Her cruse was not exhausted. . . *not vessel*. Every one was filled. . . *oil*, in the cruse. . . *stayed*, otherwise it would have flowed over. Another miracle to stay the oil. Invisible presence of God superintending this wonderful work.
- 7 *Then*, having done simply as she was bid. . . *came*, for further directions. *man*. *God*, whom she dutifully recognized as the servant whom God had sent to aid her. . . *sell oil*, for which, as it was a necessary of life, purchasers would soon be found. . . *pay debt*, be honest, own the justice of the claim. . . *live*, till remunerative labour can be found. . . *the rest*, the money over and above the sum needed to satisfy the creditor, or the oil remaining after sufficient for the purpose had been sold.

The Widow's Difficulty—Helper—Deliverance.

- I. THE WIDOW'S DIFFICULTY. (1.) *Nature of it.* A debt. One that she could not pay. Might not be much, but she was poor. (2.) *Had come upon her suddenly.* Otherwise her husband had not left her thus. Some provision would have been made. (3.) *Aggravations of the difficulty.* Her sons, instead of being her stay and support in her widowhood, must now work for another. She must now, advanced in life (otherwise they could hardly be in the college of prophets), work for her bread. Her sorrow further increased by the change in the prospects of her sons. Instead of being prophets they must be bondsmen. It does not necessarily follow that her creditor was hard-hearted. He may have been. He seems only to have wanted his own. He may have been poor. On the other hand, he may have rejoiced at breaking up such a home.
- II. THE WIDOW'S HELPER. God. (1.) *Agreeable to his nature.* Not strange if you consider his character. Loving, pitiful, tender, compassionate. Knows what we have need of. A just God. Would equally defend the right of the creditor, as well as the case of the widow. (2.) *In harmony with his word.* Quote *promises* and *laws* concerning widows. They and orphans are his special care. (3.) *In aiding her, he employs the prophet.* It may be that her connection with the prophets (her husband) had brought her into this strait. If so, there was a fitness in the selection of her instrument of deliverance. Man the helper of man. Man blessed, that he may become a blessing. (4.) *He aided in answer to prayer.* She sought and found. She came first to Elisha. Trial of faith and reward of it.
- III. THE WIDOW'S DELIVERANCE. (1.) *Speedily effected.* Not long years of hard service of her sons and herself. This prompt help shows the prophet's sympathy, and sense of justice too. (2.) *Strange method.* Vessels borrowed. Great many. All her neighbours. Her house filled with them of all sizes, &c. (3.) *The command.* Close doors. No prying eyes of people who might misunderstand the whole case. "Pour out." She does so, and her cruse fills all the vessels. Sells the oil and pays the debt. (4.) *The effect.* Her character for honesty vindicated. Her sons saved to her, and to their high vocation. She is saved from the need of hard and unaccustomed toil. The Divine friend of the helpless and poor is, by this history, commended to all widows. The story is one of many encouraging events that may lead widows, and such as are friendless, to trust in God. Many sad hearts, empty of comfort, have been filled with the oil of joy out of her cruse.

LEARN—

- I. The best people are sometimes exposed to trial. Trials not to be confounded with judgments.
- II. God is a present help in the time of need.
- III. We should sympathize with the sad, as Elisha with the widow
- IV. Our little may go *far*, with God's blessing.

B.C. 889. 2 Kings iv. 18—37

- 18 *grown*; yet still a very young child. . . *father*, who appears from this to have been a farmer. . . *reapers*, who were cutting down the wheat or barley (Ru. ii. 4). . . *and said*, some time after. . . *My head* (Job xiv. 1, 2; Jer. iv. 19). During the harvest-time. The heat very great. This was probably a sunstroke (*coup de soleil*); if so, very dangerous, and often fatal. [Army of Baldwin IV., crusaders, reduced more by heat than sword.] . . *And he*, the father. . . *a lad*, one of the young reapers. . . *Carry*, for he was now too ill to walk. . . *mother*, whose deep love would suggest careful nursing and proper remedies. . . *his mother* (Isa. xl. 15; lxvi. 13; Lu. vii. 12). . . *on knees*. She patiently nursed him. . . *noon*, probably a long time. . . *died*, this *only* child, and granted as a special blessing (vv. 15, 16).
- 21, 22 *went up door out*: a woman of decision and action. . . *called husband*, in the harvest-field. She does not tell him what had happened. He could do no good, and she would not hinder his work. . . *asses*, common beast for riding. . . *run*, hasten, and not keep the young man too long from his work. . . *he said*, astonished at so strange a request, which the hour of the day—noon—made more remarkable. . . *new moon sabbath*, when religious services would supply a good reason. . . *It well*, does not tell the reason.
- 24 *to servant*, who ran by the side. . . *Drive forward*, make the greatest possible haste. . . *slack riding*, Heb. restrain not for me to ride. . . *went came*, went on till she came. . . *mount Carmel* (less. 117), in some part of the range lived Elisha. . . *man God*, probably resting at noon within the door of his house. . . *afar off*, hastening across the plain. . . *Gehazi* (=valley of vision), a man who was not worthy of such a master. . . *Shunammite*, so called from Shunem (=two resting-places), where she dwelt (v. 8), now Sulam, on slope of *Jebel ed-Dûhy* (Little Hermon), opposite
- 26 *Zer'in*. . . *meet*: courtesy. . . *Is it well?* All that God appoints is well. It was well that she found the man of God at home, well that she had
- 27 faith to come to him now. . . *caught feet*: reverence, respect, said nothing, for grief. . . *Gehazi*, officious. . . *thrust away* (Matt. xv. 23; xx. 31; Mar. x. 13; Jo. iv. 27; xii. 4—6). . . *Let alone* (Mar. xiv. 6; Jo. xii. 7). *vexed*, Heb. bitter, with grief. . . *Lord hid*. He only knows what the Lord
- 28 tells (Pro. xxv. 2). . . *Then*, recovering from her excitement. . . *a son*.
- 29 At once Elisha perceives what is amiss. . . *Gehazi*, whose officiousness needed employment and correction. . . *gird loins*, gather up thy robe in thy belt for a journey. . . *my staff*, symbol of power. *Ill*, rod of Moses. . . *salute not*, lose no time in idle talking on the way. . . *staff face*: with
- 30 wondrous faith he thought that would suffice. . . *he arose*, which he did
- 31 not at first intend to do. . . *Gehazi*, full of importance. . . *not awaked*.
- 32 Elisha must not be too bold. Gehazi is also taught a lesson. . . *child*.
- 33, 34 *dead*, and not in a faint. . . *twain*, two (A.S. *twégen*). . . *lay child*,
- 35 as Elijah (less. 115). . . *walked*, in an agony of anxiety and prayer. . .
- 36, 37 *Take son*. How great her wonder! How willing to do this! . . *fell feet*, in profound reverence and gratitude. . . *took son*, clasping him to that bosom on which a short time before he lay so cold. . . *went out*, of the presence of Elisha, leaving him to thank God for the great power that accompanied his effort.

A Mother's Delight—Trial—Wife's Example—Mother's Reward.

- I. A PROUD MOTHER'S DELIGHT. (1.) Her *son*. The pleasure she took in watching his childhood, growth, &c. He was her treasure (as Cain was Eve's ; see less. 4). (2.) He was her *only* son. This would increase her anxiety, and also her delight in him (*com.* Jud. xi. 34 ; Lu. ix. 38). (3.) The child of *promise* (vv. 16, 17). Hebrew wives anxious to have children. Especially to have a son. This desire natural, not confined to Hebrews. Her husband was well off, and here was a son to inherit the father's property and name. (4.) *Harvest time*. Her child sent out to play in the harvest field. She watches him depart, and thinks of the happy day he would have, and the meeting at night.
- II. A TENDER MOTHER'S TRIAL. (1.) The child *in the field*. Youthful sports. Playing at harvesting. The father's pleasure. The sunstroke. My head ! my head ! The father's sorrow. "Carry him to his mother." A mother the best nurse. (2.) She sees her *child returning*. Not running by the father's side, but carried. Her anxiety. Her fears. (3.) *Nurses her child*. The time drags on. The mother does not tire. The child dies. (4.) *She has faith left*. Faith a good companion in trouble. This child of promise could not be lost ! Should not be if she could help it. Carries the child into the prophet's chamber.
- III. A GOOD WIFE'S EXAMPLE. (1.) Considers not her own feelings only, but her husband's also. How great his grief on his return, and finding death in his house. (2.) Resolves on immediate action. Will visit the man of God. Cannot do this without assistance. The distance is very great. Calculates the time, can accomplish it before the day is over. (3.) Hastens to the field. Begs for one of the young men, &c. Does not tell her husband. Would not grieve him. A hint for those who unnecessarily burden other people with all their troubles (*ill.* children who torment their parents with the minute rehearsal of all their little grievances).
- IV. A HAPPY MOTHER'S REWARD. (1.) She returns with the prophet. Who would bring a doctor to a dead child ? Her faith. (2.) The child's wonderful restoration to life. (3.) The *first* reward. Clasp- ing the living child to her heart. (4.) *Second* reward. The father's return and greeting. Pleased to find that his child is well. Astonishment at learning the history of the day. Men at their occupations little think of the trials at home. Should commend their dear ones to God. (5.) Her *after* rewards. The preservation and growth of this child.

LEARN—

- I. Repay a mother's love and anxious care.
- II. Try to bear your trial nobly, without making other people bear it. They have their own.
- III. Jesus will raise all children up at the last day. What is the life he will raise us to ?

B.C. 889. 2 Kings v. 1—14.

- 1 *Naaman* (=pleasantness), Lu. iv. 27. . . *captain*, commander-in-chief; a post needing great physical endurance as well as courage, &c. . . *host*, army. . . *king*. *Syria*, Ben-hadad (less. 127), an idolater. . . *great man*, a favourite. . . *with*, before, in the court of. . . *deliverance*, *lit.* victory. Per. that referred to in 1 Ki. xxiii., when Ahab came against Ramoth-gilead. . . *in valour*, very courageous. . . *but*. Generally a *but* in the most prosperous condition; a "crook" in every "lot". . . *had gone*, during the former war between Syria and Israel. . . *companies*, marauding parties. . . *captive*. Peaceful citizens usually the greatest sufferers in political feuds. . . *little maid*, not necessarily a little child (*note*, v. 33; less. 121), a young maiden. . . *waited*, Heb. = was before. . . *Naaman's wife*, to whom, to please their captain, they had presented her; or Naaman had bought her, as a slave,
- 3 of them. . . *said*. *mistress*, who, perhaps, was kind to her; and compassionated her bondage. . . *Would*. *God* (Num. xi. 29; Ac. xxvi. 29; 1 Cor. iv. 8) = Oh that God would will it. . . *my lord*, Naaman. . . *prophet*, Elisha, of whom she had often heard in her Hebrew home. . . *in Samaria*, in mt Carmel. . . *recover*, Heb. = gather in. Call back his health. . . *leprosy* (see
- 4 *anal.*). . . *one*, of the attendants, or perhaps N.'s wife. . . *the maid*, who thus
- 5 returned good for evil. . . *ten silver* = £3535 18s. 9d. . . *pieces* = ? shekels. 6000 an immense sum. If shekel = £1 10s. 5d., this would = £10,925 + £3535 18s. 9d. = £14,460 18s. 9d. . . *raiment*, suitable for festive occasions. The costliness of the present indicates the wealth of the king of Syria, and
- 6 his esteem for Naaman. . . *thou recover*, cause to be cured. A godless man would suppose that even a Divine gift might be bought (*com.* Ac. viii. 18; *C. D. N. T.* 224); and a despotic king, that even a prophet of God
- 7 must obey a human command. . . *rent*. *clothes*, in consternation; not because he saw the blasphemy of this. . . *seeketh*. *quarrel*, the only thing
- 8 that concerned him. . . *Elisha*. *heard*. God permits Elisha to aid Jehoram in his distress, probably that he may be induced to treat the servants of God with more consideration. . . *sent*. *king*, who seems not to have thought of Elisha. . . *he know*, and Jehoram would know it also. . . *prophet*. *Israel*,
- 9 and nowhere else; and only one such prophet there. . . *horses*. *chariot*, in great state. . . *stood*. *door*, in great pride. Did not go in. . . *sent*, to humble his pride. . . *messenger*, Gehazi. . . *wash*, bathe. . . *seven*, the Hebrew
- 11 sacred number (Lev. xiv. 7; Num. xix. 4, 19; Jos. vi. 4). . . *I thought*.
- 12 He would not only be cured, but in his own way. . . *Abana*, &c. See footnote. . . *better*, not for his purpose, as he might easily prove. Jordan was only useful as the God of Israel willed it. . . *rage*, which, added to his
- 13 leprosy, made his case worse. . . *servants*, more discreet than mighty Naaman. . . *father*, respectful salutation. . . *great thing*, which had better
- 14 suited his pride. . . *much rather*, because the method is so easy. . . *Then*, overcome by their arguments. . . *went down*: the land falls toward the Jordan. . . *according*: he is forced to do as he is bid. . . *man*. *God*, not according to saying of his own pride. . . *clean*, greatly to his own surprise and joy.

S. J. C. ii. 325. K. D. B. I. iv. 315. S. S. P. 110, 409, note, 414 g. Porter's "Five Years in Damascus," i. 27, 255, ff. T. L. B. 469, 652—654. Jamieson's East. Man., Old. Test., 281. Dickenson's Sacred Oracles, 127. Giant Cities of Bashan, 338. Brook's Works, iv. 88 (Nichol).

The Captive Maid—the Proud General—the Magnanimous Prophet.

I. THE CAPTIVE MAID. A prisoner in a strange land. Torn from home and friends. Cruelly treated. Carried with her both pity and piety. Had compassionate regard for the master who detained her in bondage, and a pious regard for the prophet of Israel. Did not harbour feelings of revenge.

“The fairest action of our human life
Is scorning to revenge an injury;
For who forgives without a further strife,
His adversary’s heart to him doth tie.
And ’tis a firmer conquest truly said,
To win the heart than overthrow the head.”—(*Lady E. Carew.*)

II. THE PROUD GENERAL. A commander of armies, himself the slave of a foul disease; and worse still, of a proud heart. Must receive instruction of a slave. His visit to Elisha. Letter of king of Syria. The great present. Ostentatious arrival at Elisha’s house. His expectation. Elisha will come out, &c. A comparison of Jordan and king of Damascus. God’s plans and human thoughts.

“Humble we must be, if to heaven we go;
High is the roof there, but the gate is low:
Whene’er thou speak’st, look with a lowly eye—
Grace is increased by humility.”—(*Robert Herrick.*)

III. THE MAGNANIMOUS PROPHET. Willing to be the servant of man, E. is also a servant of God, can therefore serve men only in God’s way. Is willing to bless N., though an enemy of Israel. Though he knows the restored health of N. may be employed against his countrymen. Is willing also to aid the king of Israel, by acceding to king of Syria’s request. Cures N., but will receive nothing for the cure. Might have exacted conditions (promises of peace, &c.). The character and conduct of Elisha an illustration of the mercy of God in a wicked age, and amongst rebels (*com. less. 127*). The mercy so luminous in the *New Test.* shines in the *Old* also. One God of the whole Bible. No change. The same *now* as *then*. Would not have *any*, not even rebels, perish.

LEARN—

- I. To forgive injuries.
- II. To pity the unfortunate, even if they are enemies.
- III. To guard against pride, it may hinder us of salvation. Nearly prevented N. from being cured.
- IV. Our great cure is offered without money or price. There is a *fountain* open. But only *one*. It is God’s choice: let us not allow our methods to compete with his.

B.C. 889. 2 Kings v. 15—27.

- 15 *And he, Naaman* (less. 124). . . *man. God, Elisha. . . company, personal attendants. . . and came* (Lu. xvii. 15—18). This Naaman had some fine elements of character. Consider the age in which he lived, and that he was an idolater. Here was not simply gratitude, but great humility. A Syrian, and one who had been very contemptuously treated, returning to give thanks, &c. . . *no God, no true and saving God* (Jos. ii. 9; Isa. xliii. 10, 11; Rom. x. 10). . . *blessing, a gift, as a blessing* (Gen. xxiii. 11; 2 Cor. ix. 5).
- 16 *I. none.* The king had received a great gift (less. 124), but the prophet would not have an ignorant heathen suppose that the gift of God was *sold. urged*, not only after the formal manner of the East, but true gratitude.
- 17 *two. burden*, as much as two mules can carry. . . *of earth?* Opens a curious question. A common idea of idolaters that the power of deities was limited to the lands in which they worshipped. Naaman believed that the God of I. was the greatest of all gods; but still that his power was limited to the soil of Israel. Washing in Jordan, an Israelitish river, might strengthen this idea. . . *but. Lord*, and this he thought he could not do except on the soil of Israel (Jo. iv. 20—24).
- 18 *master*, the king of Syria. . . *Rimmon* (=the exalted?) the pomegranate, the symbol of generative power, was sacred to this Syrian god. . . *pardon.* It was his intention either to make an altar of the earth (Ex. xx. 24), or to have a plot of Israelitish earth as a place for prayer. He seems to feel that God may be displeased with his worship of Rimmon also.
- 19 *Go. peace.* Elisha does not say yea or nay; simply gives Naaman a parting benediction. . . *little way.* He had gone but a short distance when a new incident occurs.
- 20 *Gehazi*, doubtless vexed that his master declined a gift; saw no reason why *he* might not receive one. . . *this Syrian*, a greater inducement to him—he was a foreigner.
- 21 *lighted down.* Haughty Naaman was changed. He will now treat even the servant with respect (*com. vv. 9—11*).
- 22 *My master.* The first lie necessitated others, to conceal the consequences of this one. A common case. . . *Behold, &c.* A most elaborate falsehood. . . *give them.* He does not see, or thinks that N. will not, that it would be equally wrong for *these*, as for Elisha, to receive a gift.
- 23 *Be content*, thou shalt be satisfied. . . *servants. bare.* This must have alarmed Gehazi lest Elisha should see them returning.
- 24 *tower*, or secret place. . . *bestowed*, stowed away, concealed. . . *let. go*, sent them away.
- 25 *stood before*, as composed as possible, as if nothing had happened. . . *Whence, &c.* A searching question, that should have awakened sorrow and confession. *no whither*, Heb. not hither and thither. He must continue to fabricate falsehoods.
- 26 *Went. heart, &c.* Do you think I know not? . . *oliveyards, &c.* Elisha not only knew what G. had received, but also what he intended to do with the present.
- 27 *leprosy. cleave*, as a punishment. How little can wealth benefit if associated with the leprosy of sin?

Gratitude—Generosity—Superstition—Craft.

- I. GRATITUDE. *Naaman*. Mighty N., who had doubtless often bathed without benefit in the waters of Damascus, tried the river Jordan, and was immediately cleansed. He returns to E. to thank him. How different now is N. *Ill.* the case of those who have been spiritually cleansed. Old things passed away. He acknowledges the supreme God as the only God. Does this publicly in the presence of all his company. Would make an acknowledgment to Elisha, not as a recompense, but as a gift of gratitude.
- II. GENEROSITY. *Elisha*. By no means a man of great worldly wealth. Dependent on the bounty of Providence. Followed no regular calling. Lived in an age when the servants of God, as such, were ill rewarded. Yet would not receive a gift at the hands of N. His desire to lay N. and the king of Syria, his master, under an obligation to Israel. This to preserve peace. Especially he desired to impress them with the greatness and goodness of God; to remind them of those higher blessings which God would freely give. Hence, for the sake of God's honour and his country's welfare, he would take no reward.
- III. SUPERSTITION. *Naaman*. Although thus grateful, and making his confession of the true God, he is not fully enlightened. Still regards God as a local deity. The mightiest God in the world, but limited to Israelitish soil. He would therefore like to carry back with him some of that soil. He thought to worship in any spot on that soil would secure the favour of God. Elisha makes no reply to this request. Certainly cannot approve this course of N. Sends him back with his blessing. N. felt that to worship Rimmon was wrong, but hoped to be forgiven by him on whose consecrated soil he stood.
- IV. CRAFT. *Gehazi*. Astonishment with which this time-serving soul must have witnessed the declining of a gift. Cannot penetrate the motive, nor appreciate so lofty a principle of piety and generosity. Follows N., obtains a present; returns, is questioned by E., who would have G. think of higher things.

“Is this a time to plant and build,
Add house to house, and field to field,
When round our walls the battle lowers,
When mines are hid beneath our towers,
And watchful foes are stealing round
To search and spoil the Holy ground.”—(*Keble.*)

Elisha's question, “Is this a time?” &c., shows that his generosity was designed to improve the relation of the two countries. This design had been nullified by G., and hence his leprosy.

LEARN—

- I. To cultivate gratitude.
- II. To do good without the hope of any return.
- III. Guard against all forms of superstition.
- IV. Guard against impious craft. Not to covet anything but the best gifts (*C. D. N. T.* 25, 159).

2 Kings vi. 1—7.

- 1 *sons, prophets*. Not sons in the natural sense, but men in training for the prophet's, or preacher's, work. Thus in yet another sense Timothy was the son of Paul (1 Tim. i. 2; 2 Tim. i. 2; *com.* 1 Cor. iv. 15; Tit. i. 4; 1 Tim. v. 1). . . *place*, either Beth-el or Jericho, probably the latter. . . *strait* (Lat. *strictus*=close drawn), narrow, confined, small.
- 2 *Jordan*, in the valley of which river they would find trees suited for the purpose. . . *take thence*, from trees that were common property. . . *beam*, or tree. Very likely of palm trees, which were numerous there at that time. . . *a place*, house, suited for the purpose of school of prophets. While the Holy Spirit gives the highest qualification (1 Cor. xii. 28—31; Eph. iv. 11, 12), human learning not to be despised. The apostles had not only the direct inspiration of the Spirit, but also the instructions of Jesus (see also Ac. xviii. 26). . . *Go ye*. The scheme had his approval.
- 3 *Be content*. Show thy approval. Be satisfied with our work. . . *go*, to encourage and advise. . . *servants*, who are willing to work under thy directions. . . *I, go*. The head of this college entered heartily into this good work, and the "*sons*" showed their devotion also by their labours.
- 4 *went, them*. The "principal" and the "students" set out together. Hint of co-operation between *teacher* and *scholars* in good works. . . *came, Jordan*, from Jericho, about 5 miles. . . *cut, wood* (Deut. xx. 19; Isa. x. 15; Jer. x. 3; Matt. iii. 10; Ps. lxxiv. 5).
- 5 *ax head*, Heb. =iron (Eccl. x. 10; Isa. x. 34). . . *fell*. It flew off the haft, or handle. . . *water*, of the *Jordan*. . . *cried*, in consternation, thinking it was irretrievably lost. . . *borrowed*, which, together with the fact that these men were building their own house, is suggestive of their poverty. Erecting their own college with *borrowed* tools.
- 6 *Where*. Elisha also concerned to recover it. More so than he probably would have been had it been their own property. As he was anxious that the widow should pay a just debt (less. 122), so he was careful of borrowed property. (Hint to scholars on conscientious regard for property of others. See *Chambers' Moral Class Book*, 104.) . . *shewed, place*, in mid-stream, whence, if the water had not been deep, he could have recovered it without aid. . . *he*. Elisha would rather work a miracle than lose this *borrowed* axe. Thus also he strengthened the respect of others for things *borrowed*. . . *stick*. The same power that recovered the iron thus might have obtained it without the use of such means. (Note that, unlike Elijah, Elisha, like the Saviour in many cases, employs intermediate agencies, *K. D. B. I.* iv. 316.) *iron, swim*: a real miracle, notwithstanding the stick, which was not inserted into the axe head, but thrown on the surface of water.
- 7 *Take, up*; there it is, recover it. . . *to thee*, to be used as before in thy work. . . *put, hand*. He would draw it to the shore probably with the stick that was thrown into the water. The miracle consisted in causing the iron, whose specific gravity is much greater than water, to swim; and the purpose of it was an honest wish to return what was borrowed, and encourage conscientiousness in this respect.

The Loan—the Loss—the Recovery.

- I. THE LOAN. An axe. (1.) *Kindly lent* to men in need, probably with many promises on the one side and many injunctions on the other. Not to be lost or injured. (2.) A very *valuable loan* at that time. Manufacture of metals imperfectly understood *then*, as compared with *now*. Manufactured articles were therefore more expensive, and more difficult to obtain. (3.) A willingness to lend shows a kind heart. Sympathy with the object and purposes of the borrower. Should therefore not be abused. A willingness to lend, but never to borrow, which is the proud boast of some, is a pitiful spirit. Sometimes to give one the opportunity of lending is to do him good by exercising his benevolence and good-will. Imagine a friend who is always willing to lend to you, but never to borrow, you would regard him as proud and independent; and proper neighbourly obligation would not be mutual.
- II. THE LOSS. (1.) *Accidental*. Not altogether void of thoughtlessness. Should have taken care that the head was more firmly united to the haft, or that the blow was delivered in another direction. (2.) *Serious*. Could not be easily replaced. Axe-heads scarce and expensive, and the borrower poor. But the most serious part of the loss was the moral effect of it. The non-return of loans makes lenders chary of assisting those who need such help. If that axe were not returned, the lender might not be willing to loan something else to another neighbour in need, certainly could not lend that article. People who are remiss in returning in due time, and undamaged, borrowed property, little think what injury they do to benevolent and neighbourly feeling, or what damage they inflict upon others (hint concerning borrowing books, &c., &c.).
- III. THE RECOVERY. (1.) He who had lost it did not treat the matter as of no importance. His concern a good sign. Would there were more of it in the world. (2.) He noticed where it fell, looked anxiously at the water. Prob. sounded it. Deep. Could not find or recover it. (3.) Went in dismay to the prophet. (4.) Elisha comprehended the *situation* at once. The axe must be recovered, for *monetary*, and above all, *moral* reasons. He was not the man to work miracles on every pretext. This was no slight matter. No one should have reason to regret he had aided, even by a loan, in the building of the prophets' college. Confidence in the prophets should not be damaged by the loss of the axe. Safe return had been promised, and returned safely it should be.

LEARN—

- I. To be conscientious in the matter of borrowing and lending.
- II. To be more anxious concerning the safety of borrowed articles than even of our own.

2 Kings vi. 8—23.

- 8 *Then*, about this time. . . *king. Syria*, Ben-hadad (=son, or worshipper, of *Hadad*, probably the sun), son of Ben-hadad (1 Ki. xv. 18—20), son of Tabrimon, son of Hezion. King of Damascus and smaller states around it. *warred. Israel*. He was generally at war with Israel, was once taken prisoner (1 Ki. xx.). Three years after, Ahab was killed in a battle with him (xxii. 1, 31—37). It was he that sent the letter about Naaman (2 Ki. v. 5—7; less. 124). Ultimately murdered by Hazael (less. 128). [This B. was defeated in three battles by the Assyrian king, Silimarish or Shalmanubar, whose victories are recorded on a black obelisk in the British Museum.] . . *counsel*, held a council of war. . . *servants*, captains in his army. . . *such. place*, some place mutually agreed upon, as best for strategic purposes. Good for aggression, and covering line of retreat. The name of the place not allowed to transpire.
- 9 *man. God*. Elisha lays the king of Israel—Jehoram—under further obligations; encouraged to do so probably because of the putting down of Baal-worship. . . *sent*. He was as eyes to the king. . . *such. place*, disclosing Ben-hadad's secret.
- 10 *sent. place*, to see if it were so. The Vulgate reads,—“The king of Israel sent to the place, and pre-occupied it.” This is likely, though not expressed in the Hebrew text. . . *not once. twice*, several times. The king of Syria found the enemy on the camping-ground he had selected.
- 11 *sore troubled*, perplexed with suspicion of the fidelity of his servants. . . *which. us*. He thought there was a traitor in his camp. Knew not the truth of the matter.
- 12 *one*, having more confidence in the rest than the king, and a truer insight into the case. This *one* may have been Naaman, who had good reason to know Elisha. . . *words. bedchamber*. Even thy most private conversation is not hidden from him.
- 13 *fetch*, either to kill him, or by bribes to make use of him. Though but for Gehazi (less. 125) Naaman might have known that Elisha was not a man to be bribed (*ill. Balaam*, less. 77). . . *Dothan* (less. 33).
- 14 *Therefore sent*. Did he forget that Elisha would know this, as well as his other plans?
- 15 *servant*. Was this Gehazi again? . . *forth*, to city walls; or from the house, and he heard of it from some in the city.
- 16 *they*. Who were *they*? . . *more*, in number, power, resources.
- 17 *prayed*: power of prayer. . . *open. eyes*, especially eye of faith. . . *full. horses, &c.* (Ps. xxxiv. 7; lxviii. 17; Matt. xxvi. 53).
- 18 *blindness*: prayer could close as well as open eyes at Dothan.
- 19 *bring. man*, and show what manner of man he is. . . *he led them*. Wonderful sight, this army struggling over 12 miles of rugged ground!
- 20 *Samaria*, surrounded by army of Israel.
- 21 *smite them*. A dastardly proposal, to slay prisoners of war.
- 22 *set bread. water*, return good for evil (Matt. v. 44; Lu. xxiii. 34; Ac. vii. 60; 1 Cor. iv. 12, 13; 1 Pet. ii. 23; iii. 9). Christ's law of mercy anticipated by Elisha.
- 23 *when. eaten*. They expected to be slain. . . *master*, with a strange tale of an enemy's generosity to tell. (How generously God treats blind rebels.) *no more*, i. e. for a considerable time. The event of the next verse was a year later. Even Ben-hadad's heart was touched for a time.

 Councils of Wickedness—Devices of Wisdom—Judgment of Mercy.

- I. THE COUNCILS OF WICKEDNESS. Ben-hadad and his captains. [Satan and his peers (*Milton, Par. Lost*, bk. II). Deliberations of persecutors (Ps. ii. 2). Infidel conclaves. Pharisees, &c., against Jesus (Matt. xii. 14; Mark iii. 6; Jo. xi. 53; Lu. xxiii. 51).] (1.) Who were *present*. King and captains. Had a common object; thought they could trust to each other. (2.) *Purpose* of meeting:—(a.) *General*, to levy war against Israel. (b.) *Special*, to fix on the site of the camp. It must be good for attack, defence, or retreat. Suitable also for an ambuscade. (3.) The *spirit* of the counsellors:—(a.) Warlike. (b.) *Mendacious*. Plunder, &c. (c.) *Secret*. The place of camp not to be told. *Com.* with objects and methods of evil counsellors.
- II. DEVICES OF WISDOM. (1.) Wisdom of God (Ps. xxxiii. 10; Isa. viii. 10; xix. 3; Jer. x. 7). (2.) Knows past, present, and future. Understands thoughts, desires, purposes, &c. [*Ill.* knew all Herod purposed about the infant Saviour (Matt. ii. 1—12; *C. D. N. T.* 4), &c., &c.] Hence it is that so much evil has been avoided, and many persecutions, &c., have been permitted to run their course, because he knew the good that would come of them. (3.) He lodges this wisdom sometimes *in men* (1 Ch. xii. 32; Esth. i. 13; Job xxiv. 1), as prophets, &c. Seers. Especially Jesus, the “wisdom of God” (1 Cor. i. 34; Col. ii. 2, 3). (4.) Sometimes *in books*. Especially the Bible. Thoughts of God (Heb. iv. 12). Bible a discernor, revealer, guide, &c., &c. (5.) In this history Elisha the depositary of Divine wisdom. Had insight into designs of Ben-hadad, and therefore frustrated them (Eccl. ix. 14—16).
- III. JUDGMENT OF MERCY. Syrian host stricken with blindness. If, that the works of God might be manifest (Jo. ix. 3), one man was blind, how much more do all these “manifest?” &c. They are led to Samaria. No escape. King of Israel’s question (v. 21). Elisha’s reply (v. 22). The opinion of king com. with that of Elisha. If Jehoram had done as he said, the Syrians would have taken revenge, and God would have been dishonoured by his servant being made an instrument of vengeance. As it was, end of war for a season. *Ill.* we are all blind. Sin blinding in nature. Thus blinded, Christ—the great Prophet—comes not to condemn, but save. He leads us to the banquet-house. Sanctuary. Gospel feast. Fat things, &c. How do we return this mercy? He might destroy us. “Spare him yet” is the judgment of mercy. “Shall I smite?” says Justice. Do we become friends of Jesus? Or only cease our animosity for a season, to rebel more violently by and by. He leads into chamber of affliction also. Does he smite? Does he let disease smite? What do we do on our recovery. What the world does to its enemies, com. with what Christ does (Prov. xxv. 22; Rom. xii. 20). Restored sight reveals two things—*danger* and *mercy*.

LEARN—God spares the wicked, who are completely in his power.

2 Kings viii. 7—15.

- 7 *Elisha*, fearing less the anger of Ben-hadad than Elijah the wrath of Ahab (less. 118). . . *came*, divinely directed. . . *Damascus* (less. 11, 13, 15). . . *Ben-hadad* (less. 127). . . *sick*, very ill. . . *told him*. Very likely Naaman played an important part in some of these events. He knew Elisha. At any rate there would be in Damascus some of the "company" (v. 15) of Naaman.
- 8 *Hazael* (1 Ki. xix. 15; less. 118). It does not appear that Hazael was literally anointed, the designation of him seems all that was intended. He was evidently at this time high in favour with the king. . . *present*. Then, as now, the idea that money was all powerful to purchase anything seems to have been common. (The best things cannot be purchased. *Ill.* peace, pardon, heaven, *C. D. N. T.* 217.) . . *recover*. Why so anxious to know? would he prepare only if death were near (this the ill-manner of many), or plan wickedness if it seemed distant?
- 9 *So Hazael*, who perhaps also desired to know. . . *every thing*: a rich present, for the best of all good was there. . . *forty camels* (less. 21). Since an ordinary camel load=1000 lbs, this must have been a princely offering. *thy son*: a respectful salutation, recognition of the prophet's office.
- 10 *mayest*. Nothing in thy disease naturally to prevent this. . . *howbeit*, notwithstanding thou mightest recover. . . *surely die*: thus Ben-hadad was to be warned. . . *he*, Elisha.
- 11 *settled stedfastly*, fixed a penetrating glance upon. The gaze of a *seer*. *until he*, i. e. Hazael. . . *ashamed*, abashed, confounded, conscious that his thought and wish were known. Happy for us and for others that we cannot read the history and character of men in their faces. What sad revelations would there be! How much distrust! . . *wept*, at the vision that face disclosed.
- 12 *Why weepeth?* Hazael knew only a part:—his wish, but not his future life. . . *answered*, predicting by supernatural teaching the future of this wicked man.
- 13 *Hazael said*, astounded by what he heard. The ungodly are unwilling to believe they are capable of great wickedness (Jer. xvii. 9; 1 Jo. iii. 20). *dog thing*. Nothing but a despicable creature would be guilty of such wickedness. Yet, as one quaintly says, "the dog did it." *Before* wickedness is done, many a sinner imagines that only a dog could do it, yet does not *afterwards* repent. . . *thou king*, the very thing that Hazael desired, and to procure which now proceeds along the steps of his wicked life.
- 14 *What said?* poor anxious man. . . *answered*, and told a direct falsehood.
- 15 *he*, Hazael. . . *thick cloth*, the better suited for his fell design. . . *dipped*. *water*, to make it air-proof. . . *spread face*. Some imagine that this was simply to cool the head of the fevered king, and that by checking perspiration suddenly, it undesignedly occasioned death. But doubtless his intention was so to kill the king as to leave no mark of violence on his person. Still there is a little ambiguity here. Dr Geddes thinks the pronoun *he* refers not to Hazael, but to Ben-hadad, who, encouraged by the assurance of Elisha, adopted this means for his own comfort, and accidentally killed himself.

 Unconscious Wickedness—Anxious Inquiry—Prediction Accomplished.

I. UNCONSCIOUS WICKEDNESS. *Hazael*. "Is thy servant," &c. Had a heart that was capable of planning and executing great wickedness, yet knew it not. Would not believe it when told. If we could have the wickedness of our hearts disclosed to us, how appalled we should be. We judge ourself by the past. That is bad enough. But we think we shall, and can, do nothing worse than that. We forget that the things of the past furnish only a hint of the direction of the future, and may be excelled in the future. More evil in each of us, even the best, than we suppose. We should fear ourselves, distrust ourselves, and only trust God. Seek clean hearts and right spirits. What might we do under severe temptation. No safeguard against sin but in the help of God.

II. ANXIOUS INQUIRY. *Ben-hadad*. A wicked and idolatrous king. Very ill. Full of anxious concern. Has no one to inquire of but the prophet Elisha, whose God he denied. In life many deride those ministers of religion whom they send for in sickness; and disobey that God whose pardon they need in sickness as the only source of comfort. If we love and serve God, we shall not be anxious to know whether we shall live or die. Shall be able to commit our souls to God.

"Lord, it belongs not to my care
Whether I die or live;
To love and serve thee is my share,
And this thy grace must give.

If life be long I will be glad
That I may long obey:
If short—yet why should I be sad
To soar to endless day?"—(*R. Baxter*.)

III. THE PREDICTION ACCOMPLISHED. Of *Elisha*. He looked in Hazael's face, and read his character and history there. Wept at that sad sight. How many parents would weep if they could see their children's histories and characters thus perfectly in their faces? Hazael was quite indignant when the prophet told him. Yet he did the crime predicted of him. Had he thoroughly believed it to be possible, and been right-hearted, how he would have prayed. Let us believe the possibility of future sin, and pray earnestly for delivering grace. If we stand, let us take heed lest we fall. Many strong men have fallen, let us not be too self-reliant. Better trust God than lean on that broken reed—*self*. Hazael might recall the prophet's words when too late. So may we. Let us seek Divine grace betimes.

LEARN—

- I. To trust in the Lord at all times.
- II. To put no confidence in the flesh.
- III. Not to judge of the future by our present feelings.
- IV. Seek Divine forgiveness of the past, and Divine guidance for the future.

B.C. 839. 2 Kings xiii. 14—20.

- 14 *Elisha*. "Our fathers! where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?" . . . *fallen sick* (xx. 1; Gen. xlviii. 1; Jo. xi. 3; Phil. ii. 26). . . *he died*, i. e. his last sickness (Ps. xii. 1; Isa. lvii. 1; Zech. i. 5). . . *Joash* (= whom Jehovah bestowed), contracted form of Jehoash, son of Jehoahaz, grandson of Jehu. Reigned 16 years, 840—825 B.C. . . *came down*. The king treated the prophet with great respect. . . *wept face*. This king permitted calf-worship at Beth-el and Dan; and yet, with these idolatrous tendencies, could value such a man as Elisha. Goodness and truth respected by the world. . . "*O my father*," &c., expression first heard from lips of Elisha at translation of Elijah. There was no flaming chariot in this case, hence it must have by this time become proverbial that a good man—a prophet especially—was equivalent to horses and chariots as a national defence.
- 15 *Elisha said*. Here again note that, in teaching as in wonder-working, Elisha uses intermediate agencies; visible means of emphasizing and illustrating thought (less. 126 and ref.). He might have told the king what he intended to reveal without the shooting and the smiting; as he might have made the iron swim without casting in the wood. His peculiar method, as distinguished from Elijah. . . *bow arrows*, weapons of war with which the king was probably provided. . . *he took*: the king obeys the prophet.
- 16 *Put hand*, Heb. "make thine hand to ride," or = (*ill.* commanding and guiding a horse). . . *put hand*, as communicating a blessing.
- 17 *eastward*, toward Syria (v. 10—14; Jo. ii. 5—8). . . *Shoot*. War was proclaimed by sending an arrow, or shooting it into the enemy's country. Many ancient peoples, as American Indians at this day, declared war in this fashion. The ceremony of casting a javelin, as declaration of war against remote enemy to whom one could not be sent, was performed by the Romans in an open field, and called *ager hostilis* (*K. P. B. in loc.*). . . *Aphek*, city in plain country of Syria, on way to Damascus, now a village called *Fik*, about 6 miles E. of S. of Galilee.
- 18 *Take arrows*, laying the bow aside. . . *took*, obeying still, and wondering. *Smite*, showing symbolically that the land of Syria should be smitten. . . *thrice stayed*, received no command to stop (iv. 6; Ex. xvii. 11).
- 19 *wroth*, as the king, having shot the arrow, and perceived Elisha's meaning, did not seem to enter heartily into the question of war. . . *thrice*, three defeats (v. 25) not sufficient to utterly destroy the strength of Syria.
- 20 *buried*, as the manner was, in a cave, and without a coffin (Jo. ix. 38—44). *bands*, marauding parties, armies. . . *Moabites* (less. 80). . . *coming in*, the commencement.
- 21 *they*, certain Israelites, who had probably neglected the prophet while he was living. . . *a man*, of their friends. . . *band*, of Moabites. . . *cast*, hurried the burial over, casting the corpse into the place nearest at hand. . . *sepulchre*, probably a cave. They would have only to remove the stone at the mouth. . . *revived* (Heb. xi. 4). A hint that men should take heed to the quickening words of the living prophets of God. By this miracle the faith of king and people in Elisha's predictions would be stimulated.

Elisha's Last Sickness—Prophecy—Miracle.

- I. THE LAST SICKNESS. Sickness unto death. Such sickness before us all. Other sicknesses premonitions of this. Better a lingering illness than a sudden death to the unprepared. To the prepared it matters little. Sudden death, sudden glory. Illness of the holy instructive. Their example never more precious. Sickness a sad time in which to prepare for death. Weakness of body, and worldly cares, and mental doubts often disturb the unprepared. Well and right to be ready before. Elisha receives a visit from a king, and an acknowledgment of his true relation to the country, as the source of its real strength. The Christian in his death is visited by a better King; and if he feels his own weakness, he is reminded of his strength and his Redeemer. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."
- II. THE LAST PROPHECY. A prediction of war and of success for Israel. About to depart to a land of peace, where the wicked cease from troubling. With his heaven-illuminated eye he sees the wars that are coming, and would prepare the king for them. The imperfection of earth enters his chamber, in the person of a half-hearted king. This brings a cloud over the otherwise bright vision of the future. The solemn grandeur of the scene. Solemn symbolical teaching. He would so teach that his last words might not be forgotten. The king would never forget that death-chamber scene. Some such scenes that *we* can never forget. Happy deaths of the holy prophetic to us of their future, suggestive of what ours, through Divine grace, may be. The dying Addison said, "Come, and see with what calmness a Christian can die."
- III. THE LAST MIRACLE. Living, he had been the instrument, in God's hands, of working many. Without gainsaying, *this* power was of God. Being dead he yet spoke. It was opportune. The king had suggested that E. was the defence of the country. Now he is dead. This miracle proved that the true defence was yet in being, and operative. He who had worked by means of the living prophet, could work without human aid. Our fathers! where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever? No. But their Master does. This God is our God for ever and ever, &c. By this miracle the king would be reminded of the chamber-scene, and the prophet's word. He would be stimulated in danger, and reminded of his duty.

LEARN—

- I. Our last sickness will soon be here. Let us while in health prepare for it. Then, while the outer man decays, the inner man will be daily renewed.
- II. May our happy death be a cheerful prediction to survivors of our coming glory, and an indication of their duty.
- III. May we so live that, being dead, we may yet speak to those who remain.

B.C. 862. Jonah i. 1—16.

- 1 *Jonah* (=dove), 820—784 B.C. Little known of personal history. The Jews have a tradition which, like many others, is baseless, that he was the widow's son whom Elijah restored (1 Ki. xvii. 17—24; less. 116). . . *Amittai* (=true, veracious), 2 Ki. xiv. 25.
 - 2 *Nineveh*, city of Ninus, or per. of *Nin*, the Assyrian god. Said to have been built by Nimrod (Gen. x. 11), on river Tigris. Now scene of utter desolation (*Newton on Prophecies*, ix. *Keith, Evidences of Prophecy*, x. See also the works of *Layard and Botta on Nineveh*). . . great city, 56 miles round, walls 100 feet high, and so broad that 3 chariots could drive abreast on them. They had 15,000 towers, each 200 feet high. Great wickedness, also, and great power. . . cry, prophesy, denounce.
 - 3 to flee, afraid to face the dangers of such a mission. . . *Tarshish* (=hard, rocky ground). Although there is difficulty in deciding site, there is little doubt but Tartessus, in south of Spain=T. (*Kalisch, Keil, &c.*). . . presence (Ps. cxxxix. 7). Did he suppose that p. was limited to Israel? . . *Joppa* (=beauty), (Jos. xix. 46; 2 Ch. ii. 16; Ezra iii. 7; Ac. ix. 36—43; x., xi.). (See *T. L. B.* 515—519). . . paid fare. "The best-concerted schemes," &c.
 - 4 wind (Ps. cxlviii. 8). . . tempest (Ps. cvii. 25—30).
 - 5 mariners, men of the sea, sailors. . . his god: of different nations, and different gods. . . asleep, worn out by fatigue and anxiety.
 - 6 shipmaster, the captain. . . thy God. Little did the captain think that Jonah's God was the only one who could calm the raging of the sea. He thought if each called upon a different god, perchance some Deity would hear.
 - 7 let lots. They were superstitious. . . fell. *Jonah* (Pro. xvi. 33). He must
 - 8 have seen the hand of God in this. . . Then said. Before they proceeded to extremes they would know his history. These rude men had a conscience.
 - 9 Hebrew, which would excite their surprise. Hebrews not much given to
 - 10 travel in those days. . . fear, fear without trust. . . afraid. These idolaters had heard of the God of Israel. . . What do? they would leave it to him, lest, taking the matter into their hands, it became worse for them. . . wrought, Heb. went and was tempestuous. Boiling, surging.
 - 12 cast sea: self-sacrifice. . . calm you a good feature; would not have others suffer through him. . . know: dearly bought knowledge.
 - 13 Nevertheless. By their desire to save him J. could see how God could touch the natural consciences of men. . . rowed. Ancient ships were propelled with oars as well as sails; but "rowed" here=digged, i. e. manœuvred.
 - 14 they. Lord. They had at last discovered the true God. . . innocent blood (Ps. xciv. 21; Pro. vi. 17; Isa. lix. 7; Matt. xxvii. 4).
 - 15 took. *Jonah*, when they had just sought mercy and direction. . . cast sea, the way of escape, as Jonah thought.
 - 16 offered sacrifice, there, on shipboard. . . vowed vow, to be fulfilled when
 - 17 they got safe to land (Ps. lxvi. 13, 14). . . great fish, not necessarily a whale, which, though popularly regarded as a fish, is not really so, but belongs to class mammalia, order cetacea. The reply to the geographical and physiological difficulty is, "The Lord had prepared." (See Matt. xix. 26; com. Matt. xii. 39—41; xvi. 4; Lu. xi. 29, 30.)
- Layard's Nineveh*, 313—315. *D. B. N. S.* i. 73; ii. 145, 476. *K. P. B.* in loc. *Dr Raleigh*, "The story of Jonah," especially 145—168. *Martin on "The Prophet Jonah"*, 221—240. *Bp. King, Lec. on Jonah* (1594), (new ed. 1864), p. 139.

Jonah Running Away—Overtaken—Brought Back.

The Prophets, in supposed order of time.

	PERIOD ILLUSTRATED BY THEIR PROPHECIES.		
	B.C.	KINGS OF JUDAH.	KINGS OF ISRAEL.
1. Jonah.	840—784		Joash, Jeroboam II.
2. Joel.	810—795	Uzziah.	
3. Amos.	810—785	Uzziah.	Jeroboam II.
4. Hosea.	800—725	Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz.	Jeroboam II., Hoshea.
5. Isaiah.	765—698	Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, and probably Manasseh.	
6. Micah.	758—699	Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah.	Pekah, Hoshea.
7. Nahum.	720—698	Probably towards the close of Hezekiah's reign.	* * * The four <i>major</i> prophets were Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. The twelve <i>lesser</i> were Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.
8. Zephaniah.	640—609	Josiah.	
9. Jeremiah.	628—585	Josiah—the Captivity.	
10. Habakkuk.	612—598	Probably in the reigns of Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim.	
11. Daniel.	606—534	During all the Captivity.	
12. Ezekiel.	595—574	Zedekiah, Captivity.	
13. Obadiah.	588—583	To conquest of Edom.	
14. Haggai.	520—518	After the return from Babylon.	
15. Zechariah.	520—510	.	
16. Malachi.	420—397	.	

- I. JONAH RUNNING AWAY. (1.) *From duty.* Looked too much at the work, and too little at the command, and who gave it. Thought too much of Nineveh, and too little of God. A good man with great defect of character. Too much self-consciousness. (2.) *From God.* The extreme folly of this. This folly often repeated. Men may not try to put a physical distance between themselves and God, who yet place mental and moral distances in the way. Infidel arguments,—running from God.
- II. JONAH OVERTAKEN. (1.) At an unexpected *time*. Jonah asleep. Thought himself safe. Carnal security. Men sleeping in their vain opinions, &c. They cannot put God away. He is in their life, about their path, though not in all their thoughts. (2.) In a strange *way*. The wind, a more obedient messenger than Jonah. Went out over the sea, and raised a storm round the vessel, and a storm of fear inside the vessel. Lots cast and Jonah thrown into the sea.
- III. JONAH BROUGHT BACK. He dreaded death if he went to Nineveh, and death is now before him. God more merciful than his fears. He who could bring the whale could save Jonah in Nineveh. Men could not raise such a storm at Nineveh as God raised on the sea. So if men flee from religious duties through fear of difficulties, let them remember that God can make the world, the society, the dogmas, they flee to, very insecure refuges. Jonah brought back by the whale, and other men by other instruments.

Jonah iii. 1—10.

- 1 *second time*. Great condescension to persist in employing one who had so shown his unwillingness and fear (Mat. xx. 6; *C. D. N. T.* 150).
- 2 *go, &c.* This work must be done, and *Jonah* must do it. . . *preach* (Jer. i. 17; Eze. ii. 7; iii. 17; Mat. iii. 8). . . *I bid*. Not your own words, but mine, however unpleasant to speak or to hear (1 Cor. ii. 4; i. 17, 18).
- 3 *went* (Ac. xxvi. 19). . . *three days' journey*, in circuit. A day's journey = 20 m.
- 4 *a day's journey*. The city was a rectangular parallelogram; 20 m. long by 10 broad. Hence *Jonah* walked through the whole length of the city crying, &c. . . *overthrown*. The preservation of the city, on condition of repentance, he was not permitted to declare. *This*, to try both the preacher and his hearers.
- 5 *believed God*. Idolaters. At the first Divine summons. How often have we heard without believing (Is. liii. 1). . . *fast*, public humiliation. . . *sackcloth*, token of abject sorrow for sin. . . *greatest.least*. All classes were included in the proclamation.
- 6 *For*, hence the royal command. . . *word.king*, of *Jonah's* preaching and prediction. . . *arose.throne*. Abdicated in favour of the King of kings, whose power and right he now acknowledges. . . *his robe*, his state dress, as king. . . *sackcloth.ashes*, admitting that morally he was on a level with the meanest of his subjects; and designed to set them an example.
- 7 *he caused*, by means of proper officials. . . *it*, i. e. the ordained fast. . . *decree*, which was irrevocable till the date had expired. . . *nobles*, his great men. There seems to have been a solemn council called at which this was enacted. *man*, who has sinned. . . *beast*, that has ministered to the service of sin. . . *taste.feed.drink*. This fast was not after the fashion of so-called modern fasts; which being merely a change from one kind of food to another—and that as a change, both wholesome and often agreeable—but a total
- 8 *abjuring of all food*.
man.beast.sackcloth. Man went into, and put his property into mourning. *turn.evil away*. This the true fast, to cease from sin; without which all other fasting is but a hollow sham, and an insult to the holiness of God (Is. lviii. 3—7; Mat. iii. 8).
- 9 *Who.tell*. Whatever the reasoning about God altering his purpose, it is plain that, putting sophistical thoughts on one side, the idea of his doing so is not contrary to the natural view of the fitness of things. . . *repent*. Human emotions often in the Bible transferred to God. Speaking after the manner of men, God is said to repent (though, strictly speaking, he is incapable of repenting), because to human vision he *appears* to change his course of conduct.
- 10 *repented*, and who shall say that he changed his mind. He had said what he would do to them as rebels; he had not said what he would in the case of their repentance. It is for the glory of God to conceal. Now, the glory of his concealed purpose of mercy shines forth. They had repented unconditionally, thus showing that they felt repentance to be right, apart from results.

Martin, "The Prophet Jonah," 290—354. *Dr Raleigh*, "The Story of Jonah," 216, 241. *Bishop King*, *On Jonah*, 199 ff.

The Intrepid Preacher—the Penitent City—the Merciful Deity.

NOTE. According to the Bible Chronology, Jonah went to Nineveh about 862 B.C.; some authorities give 808, others 780, and Rawlinson 760—750. Excepting chap. ii. the Book of Jonah is a simple narrative. We learn from it that the prophet, being commissioned to foretell the destruction of Nineveh, attempted to flee to Tarshish, and being overtaken by a storm, he was cast into the sea and swallowed by a great fish. Earnestly praying to God (chap. ii.), he was delivered from his miraculous prison, and he went to Nineveh, and announced its destruction. The Ninevites fasted and repented, and the threatening was repealed. Jonah, fearing to be regarded as a false prophet, repined at God's mercy, and wished for death. Leaving the city, he was sheltered by a gourd, which suddenly withered; and Jonah, manifesting anger and impatience, was shown, by *his* concern about the *gourd*, that God did well to spare repentant Nineveh.

- I. THE INTREPID PREACHER. Bold at last. Proceeds to Nineveh. The arms that encompassed him amid the storms of ocean, can surround him amid the storm of human passion in this great, proud, voluptuous city. Begins to preach. Journeys on through the great streets, squares, bazaars, markets, &c., &c., and cries, &c. Fashionable loungers, merchants, pleasure-seekers, rich, poor, &c., listen and wonder. Who can this strange preacher be? His words go home to their consciences. They do not tear him to pieces! Still he marches and cries. Gives no explanation. Simply a Divine echo in Nineveh.
- II. THE PENITENT CITY. The proud, sensual heart of the city, moved. People begin to tremble, and expect their doom. A panic seizes them. It circulates and extends from the lowliest hut to the lordly palace. A council is called. The general conscience feels that the doom is deserved and possible. A royal decree proclaims a fast. The city in mourning, wonderful sight! Imagine all the people in London one day to appear in deep mourning. All business suspended, &c. The noise of traffic silenced, and the voice of lamentation and prayer. If right for all, then right for each.
- III. THE MERCIFUL DEITY. God sees their sorrow, as he had seen their sin. It moves his pity, as his anger had been moved before. This apparent change in God, a Divine consistency. Men who are obstinate in an evil course for the sake, as they say, of consistency, forget that persistence in wrong-doing is inconsistent with their sense of justice and right. This change in God more apparent than real. The city had changed, not God. His justice and mercy ever the same. The city *was* overturned in the best sense. It became another Nineveh. Humble, penitent, believing. When it presently relapsed again, the Divine decree took effect.

LEARN—

- I. Mercy for the vilest. Even the most wicked not cut off without a warning.
- II. God “delighteth in mercy.” Would rather men should repent and live, than sin on and be lost for ever.

2 Kings xviii. 1—16.

- 1 *third year*, of the reign. . . *Hoshea* (=salvation), who conspired against Pekah, k. of Israel (2 Ki. xv. 30; xvii. 1), slew, succeeded him, and reigned 9 yrs (729—721). Not godly, but less wicked than his predecessors. . . *Elah* (=terebinth). . . *Hezekiah* (=Jehovah strengthens). If text be correct, H. was born in his father's 11th yr. Instances of paternity at that early age have been produced (see *Keil*), but some suppose an error of 5 yrs. Ancient versions give some countenance to this supposition. . . *Ahaz* (=possessor), son of Jotham (2 Ki. xvi. 2). Reigned 16 yrs (741—725).
- 2 *Twenty and five old*, or 20. . . *mother's name*. The presence of mother's name in several cases may be a hint of maternal influence for good or evil.
- 3 *right sight*, in the estimation or opinion of. . . *David father*, ancestor.
- 4 *high places*. Idolatrous altars and temples. Customary from earliest times to erect altars on hills (Gen. viii. 20; xii. 8, &c.). At length any place of worship was called a high place (*K. P. B.* on 2 Ch. xxviii. 25). *images*, statues of gods, works of *imagination*. . . *groves* (less. 117). . . *brassen serpent*, which, preserved as an interesting memento of the past, had become an object of superstitious veneration. . . *called it*, contemptuously. *Nehushtan*, merely "a piece of brass."
- 5 *none like*, for godly zeal.
- 6 *clave*, perseveringly adhered to. . . *commandments*, ceremonial and moral.
- 7 *rebelled* (xvi. 7), refused any longer to pay tribute.
- 8 *Gaza* (=the strong), (Gen. x. 19; Josh. x. 41; xi. 22; xiii. 3; xv. 47; Jud. i. 18; vi. 4; xvi. 1—3, 21—30; 1 Sam. vi. 17, &c.), now Ghuzzeh, a large town of ab. 18,000 pop. (*T. L. B.* 549). . . *borders*, surrounding district. . . *tower*, placed on the confines of the included territory. . . *fenced*, walled (xvii. 9; 2 Ch. xxvi. 10; Is. v. 2).
- 9 *Shalmaneser* (=worshipper of fire?). . . *Samaria*, cap. of Israel.
- 10 *end three years*, a long time at that time for a siege (xvii. 3—5).
- 11 *Israel*. Prob. while employed at this siege his troops ravaged the country, and sent many people away into captivity. . . *Halah*, prob. Chalcitis of Ptolemy, and ? mod. *Gla*, in the upper Khabour, above its union with the Jeruher. . . *Habor* (=joining together), now the r. *Khabour*. . . *Gozan* (=quarry?), prob. Gauzanitis of profane hist. . . *Medes*, inhab. of Media. A distance between Persia, Armenia, and Assyria, 550 m. by about 300.
- 12 *Because obeyed not*, national judgments and national sins.
- 13 *Sennacherib*. His design prob. to attack Egypt, of which Judah was the key. . . *all fenced cities* (v. 17; xix. 8), but some held out.
- 14 *Lachish* (less. 83). On the way to Egypt S.W. of Jerusalem. . . *silver gold*, ab. £351,000.
- 15 *gave*. He had much difficulty in raising the required amount. . . *silver house*. *Lord*. Funds of temple treasury accumulated for temple repairs and service of the sanctuary. . . *king's house*, personal property. Royal revenues.
- 16 *gold doors*. So great the dif. in raising so large a sum in a short time. All this tribute obtained only a temporary respite, and but excited the cupidity of the invader. This payment of money a sign of weakness, sure to be followed by further exactions.

Hezekiah's Zeal—Israel's Captivity—Judah's Reprieve.

HISTORICAL NOTE. Thus ended for ever the independent monarchy of Israel. The kings of Israel may be divided into nine dynasties :— (1.) Jeroboam and Nadab. (2.) Baasha and Elah. (3.) Zimri. (4.) Ahab, Ahaziah, and Joram. (5.) Jehu, Jehoahaz, Jehoash, Jeroboam II., and Zachariah. (6.) Shallum. (7.) Menahem and Pekahiah. (8.) Pekah. (9.) Hoshea.

I. HEZEKIAH'S ZEAL. (1.) *Youth inheriting great honour.* He was twenty-five when he began to reign. At that time, when the passions are warmest and least under control, great temptations were cast in his way. (2.) *Youth consecrating its energies to God.* What more beautiful or instructive spectacle? The time of life at which most can be done. More boldness, energy, &c., then. The greatest of human deeds were nearly all of them done by young men. (Many examples. Wellington only 45 when his last battle, Waterloo, was fought.) (3.) *Youth helping forward the progress of a people.* By destroying idolatry. Nehushtan. By reforming religion, and observing the commandments of God.

II. ISRAEL'S CAPTIVITY. (1.) *By whom procured.* King of Assyria. Wherefore? see history in *notes*. The great march of the Assyrian host across the desert proves the resolution of the invader. "The wicked are my sword." (2.) *With what results.* The ten tribes taken, scattered, and heard of no more. They were distributed in the cities of the East. Became servants to the conqueror. (3.) *Wherefore permitted* (see v. 12). Punishment the inevitable fruit of sin. God left them alone. One man was once sufficient to deliver them (less. 127), now no helper was found. To be let alone, the prey of our own hearts, and of surrounding enemies, a most terrible fate.

III. JUDAH'S REPRIEVE. Ten years after, another Assyrian king came across the great desert against the fenced cities of Judah. Doubtless all the zeal of Hezekiah was not sufficient entirely to extirpate idolatry, or Providence would have turned the course of Assyrian ambition. Yet the invasion was partially occasioned by Hezekiah's zeal. He renounced allegiance to a foreign yoke. It is evident also that the king, though one of the best, was not perfect. In course of time pride possessed his heart (2 Ki. xx. 2; 2 Ch. xxxii. 24—26; Isa. xxxviii., xxxix.). Hence he had to buy off the rapacious invader. As he destroyed the *brazen* serpent to put down superstition, so he had to give up the *gold* of the temple to rid the nation of foreign oppression.

LEARN—

- I. Good to be always zealously affected in a good thing. Youth the time to serve the Lord.
- II. Be sure your sins will find you out. High connections, and a pious parentage, and religious associations will not save.
- III. "Trust in the Lord and do good."

2 Kings xix. 14—37.

- 14 *letter*, received from Sennacherib of a blasphemous nature (*vv.* 8—13). . . *messengers*, of k. of Assyria (*v.* 9). . . *spread before* (see eng. *K. P. B.*),
- 15 opened it as in solemn presence of God, and then prayed. . . *dwellest cherubims*. *All.* to Shekinah. . . *alone*, as opp. to heathen "gods many." of *all earth*. Not a local deity, like gods of nations, as suggested by S.
- 16 (*v.* 12). . . *bow ear*. He craved special attention. . . *reproach God*. Thus
- 17 H. regarded the letter, and not as against himself alone. . . *destroyed*.
- 18 *nations*, lust of conquest. . . *gods fire*, mere idols. . . *no gods* (Is. xlv. 9
- 19 —20). . . *save us*. Only God could save. Not the armies of Judah. . . *earth know*. A better fact, the world could not know. It would promote God's glory, and the nation's weal, thoroughly to know and believe that.
- 20 *then*, some time after. How did Isaiah know of this prayer? His coming thus to the king would prove to H. that his prayer had been heard. . .
- 21 *virgin*. *All.* to weakness of the people. As a virgin. Even the women of Judah should despise great Assyria. Why? . . . *daughter Zion*. Zion fountain of strength. Z. identified with God, religion, Divine help. Weak
- 22 made strong. . . *Whom thou, &c.* The king of Assyria, either in sinful ignorance or in presumptuous sinfulness, had written this letter. . . *Holy One*. Whom S. affected to despise as the gods of the nations he had
- 23 destroyed. . . *reproached Lord*, and not simply K. Hezekiah. . . *Lebanon Carmel*. The meaning is that he had vaunted himself able to overrun the
- 24 whole country, climb the mountains, and scour the plains. . . *digged drunk*. Having conquered strange countries, I have found water in dry places for my army. . . *sole feet dried, &c.* *All.* to multitude of infantry
- 25 by which he had diverted the course of rivers, or drank the water. . . *long ago ancient times*. What S. did was only done by Divine permission. . .
- 26 *small power*, not that thy power was so vast. . . *grass house tops*, faintly
- 27 growing in the dust lodging there (Ps. cxxix. 6—8). . . *know, &c.* I,
- 28 the Lord, know all about thee. . . *hook bridle*. *All.* to management of animals in the East. So should the proud k. of Assyria be managed. . .
- 29 *unto thee*, K. Hezekiah. For two years the enemy would ravage the country, but the third year there would be peace. . . *remnant*, of the
- 30 people. . . *root fruit*. They should yet flourish in the land. . . *zeal*,
- 31 energy. Earnestness of resolution and action. . . *Lord hosts*, and therefore irresistible zeal. *Hosts*: armies of heaven. Vast resources of
- 32 power, wisdom, &c. . . *with shield*. *All.* to ancient mode of attack from
- 33 behind fences, &c. . . *bank*, mound of earth or tower. . . *this city*. He
- 34 was taking Libnah. . . *own sake*, of my honour, word, character. . .
- 35 *night*, camp sleeping, &c. . . *angel*, such the messengers of God were often called. Prob. this destruction was effected by the simoom; hot,
- 36 fatal blast (*v.* 7). . . *they arose*, those who expected an attack. . . *So Sennacherib*, whose head-quarters were prob. at a little distance from the
- 37 main army. He therefore escaped. . . *dwelt*, stayed, remained. . . *Nisroch* (=great eagle). Figures of eagle-headed deities have been found among the ruins at N. His own god could not save him, much less give him success in his campaign. . . *they escaped*, and as fugitives, were not benefited by the murder of their father.

The Prayer—the Prophecy—the Promise—the Perished Host.

NOTES ON ASSYRIAN INVASION. (713.) Sennacherib's first invasion: pacified by payment of tribute (2 Ki. xviii. 13—16; 2 Ch. xxxii. 1—8; Isa. xxxvi. 1). (710.) Sennacherib's second invasion; his army miraculously destroyed (2 Ki. xviii. 17—37, xix. ; 2 Ch. xxxii. 9—23; Isa. xxxvi. 2—22, xxxvii. ; Ps. lxxvi.).

- I. THE PRAYER. Of King Hezekiah. (1.) *Occasion of it.* Receipt of the letter. Moved with indignation and sorrow that the name of God should be derided. (2.) *Character of it. Simplicity.* Lay the matter before the Lord. *Piety.* He was jealous for the name of the Lord. That the nation may know, &c. (3.) *The answer.* It was heard at once, and the answer promptly sent.
- II. THE PROPHECY. Of Isaiah. He foretold, (1.) The contempt of even the women of Judah, for Assyria. (2.) The course pursued and thoughts entertained by the Assyrian. (3.) The perfect knowledge that God had of them and their doings. (4.) That God would lead them as he pleased, and send him back the way he came.
- III. THE PROMISE. Of a sign. That for two years there should be no tillage of the soil. Rumours of wars should deter the people from pursuing their work. Instead of being alarmed, the king should see the working of a sign. Many things that cause alarm, would, if understood, be known as signs of Divine presence and favour.
- IV. THE PERISHED HOST.

“Sennacherib's hosts,
Embattled once against the sons of God,
With insult bold, quick as the noise of mirth
And revelry, sunk in their drunken camp,
When death's dark angel, at the dead of night,
Their vitals touched, and made each pulse stand still.”
(*Pollok, Course of Time*, bk vii.)

“Like the leaves of the forest, when summer is green,
That host, with their banners, at sunset were seen;
Like the leaves of the forest, when autumn hath blown,
That host, on the morrow, lay withered and strown.
For the angel of death spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed on the face of the foe as he passed;
And the eyes of the sleeper waxed deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved, and for ever grew still!”
(*Byron, Hebrew Melodies*.)

LEARN—

- I. Call upon God in the day of trouble.
- II. That you may so, with the better grace, serve him at all times.

B.C. 712. 2 Kings xx. 1—11. (2 Ch. xxxii. 24.)

- 1 *Hezekiah* (=Jehovah strengthens), son of Ahaz, king of Judah, 25 years old on ascending the throne. Reigned 29 years (725—696). He was one of most godly kings of Judah (less. 132). . . *Isaiah* (=salvation of Jehovah), son of Amoz, whom tradition says was brother to King Amaziah. He was married, and his wife was called the prophetess (viii. 3) simply because *his* wife. Had two sons with symbolical names, Shear-jashub (=the remnant shall return) and Maher-shalal-hash-baz (=hasting to the spoil, he speeds to the prey). . . *house.order*, put worldly and spiritual concerns
- 2 to rights. . . *face.wall*, to shut out the view of surrounding things (1 Ki.
- 3 xix. 4) or, towards the temple (1 Ki. viii. 20). . . *remember*. From the character of God, he knew all would be well if he only remembered this. *walked*, lived, conducted myself. . . *truth*, I was what I seemed. . . *per-*
- 4 *fect*, upright, sincere. . . *wept sore*, Heb. "with great weeping." . . *afore* (A.S. *atforan*, "at the fore," as *bi foran*, "by the fore"="before"). . . *middle court*, or city. Or it may be the central quadrangle of the palace. *word.came*, by internal illumination. His mind divinely impressed. . .
- 5 *heard.prayer*. It was soon heard. The king had begun to pray directly Isaiah left him, and before the prophet had got beyond the precincts of the palace the prayer was heard. . . *I.heal*. Only God could do so. And whatever the remedy employed by human physicians, the healing power is always from God. . . *third day*, even so soon should he be recovered of his
- 6 dangerous sickness. . . *add.days*, beyond the time of which Isaiah spoke (*v. i*). . . *fifteen years*, a great addition to the life of a dying man. . . *out.hanā*. *Assyria*. This sickness occurred in first year of Syrian invasion
- 7 (xviii. 13). . . *lump.figs*. Still applied in some cases by physicians in the East. But the rapidity of the cure proves its miraculous nature. Some think that Hezekiah's sickness was pleurisy, or the plague, or a kind of leprosy. A poultice of figs not very uncommon in this country. Yet this of itself no more cured Hezekiah than did the ointment of clay give sight to the blind (Jo. ix. 6—15). The most scientific means need God's bless-
- 8 ing to make them effectual. . . *What.sign*. It seemed so incredible that he should recover so speedily, that he asked for confirmation of words
- 9 by a sign. . . *shadow*: no corresponding movement of the sun asserted. "The phenomenon temporal, local, confined to the notice and intended for the satisfaction of Hezekiah and his court" (*P. C.*). . . *degrees*, steps. Some think it was a stair, and the shadow on the steps indicated the hour
- 10 (*K. D. B. I.* iv. 393). . . *light.down*, or forward. This it would do in the natural course of things. . . *put backward*, which being miraculous,
- 11 would be convincing. . . *cried.Lord*, who alone could do this, as he alone could restore the king. . . *dial.Ahaz*. Probably an instrument contrived for measuring or indicating time; and as the Hebrews had no word to designate it, it is likely to have been one of the foreign novelties introduced by Ahaz from Babylon (*com.* xvi. 10; xxiii. 5—12). By some rationalists this retrogression of the shadow has been connected with a solar eclipse said to have taken place at Jerusalem on Sept. 26, 713 (B.C.) (*S. J. C.* ii. 486).

The Monarch—the Message—the Prayer—the Sign.

- I. THE MONARCH. Hezekiah. He was sick. In things essential to human nature, kings are on the common level of humanity (*ill.* sin, sickness of body and mind). A good thing when sickness does not overtake one unprepared. Hezekiah a good man. Had served God in health, felt he could pray and trust now. The consternation of some upon whom sudden calamity comes. The most important of all things to be done at once, in a very short time, when the mind is perplexed by other cares, and the body torn with pain. (1.) Sickness lies before us each. (2.) The next may be here soon, and unto death. (3.) Are we prepared for it? (4.) Is our house set in order? (5.) Is the Good Physician our friend?
- II. THE MESSAGE. Isaiah. (1.) *The boldness of his manner.* Not afraid to enter the presence of a king and speak very plainly (Nathan and David, Elijah and Ahab, &c.). (2.) He came without being sent for. Heard of the king's illness. Only *one* king to hear of. Our duty, to send; and the minister's, to come when sent for. (2.) *The solemnity of his matter.* Death. A subject that many—especially kings—do not like to hear spoken of. Directions. Thy house. (*a.*) Thy soul. (*b.*) Thy family. (*c.*) Thy kingdom. Especially *thy soul*. Some things, at the last, to be set in order within, even by the best men. How disordered are many souls (*ill.* dark room, needs to be lighted, swept, garnished, &c.). How is it with our house?
- III. THE PRAYER. Some would have been wrathful, ordered the prophet from their presence. Hezekiah prayed. He had prayed before. Had not now to learn. It was now easy, through former practice. It was like talking with an old and trusted friend. His prayer betrayed a consciousness of integrity. This not Pharisaic pride, or self-justification, though under the law there might be this, or the appearance of it. We have no need to speak of our truth and our perfect heart. Seek to have them, beware of trusting in them. To pray was all that the king could do. All that we shall presently be able to do. Do we know how to do this?
- IV. THE SIGN. God heard the prayer. Hezekiah expected to die, a prophet had told him that he would die. He had to set his house in order. Was weak. Prayed to be remembered, and God gave him 15 years for this great work. Let no one think it can be done in a day. After being told this by the prophet, he could scarcely believe it. His heavenly Father condescendingly gave a sign to strengthen his faith. The shadow going back, and the sun standing still. One great sign to us of the unchanging mercy of God is the constancy of Sun and shade. If a sudden suspension of law would convince, how much more the order and regularity of nature? When the true Sun shines in our hearts how the shadows flee away. "Let there be light."
- LEARN—I. Be prepared for sickness. II. Live in the habit of prayer. III. Attend to words of religious teachers. IV. Set your house in order. V. The great sign of Divine mercy is the cross of Jesus.

B.C. 593. 2 Kings xxv. 1—21.

- 1 *his reign*, i. e. of Zedekiah (xxiv. 20). . . *year.month.day*, Usher says January 30th, A.M. 3414. . . *Nebuchadnezzar* (= ? Nebo is the protector against attack. Nebo an Assyrian deity). . . *Babylon* (less. 20), a city of vast size and great magnificence on river Euphrates. Square, about 56 miles in circuit. Walls about 300 feet high, about 80 feet thick. 250 towers built along them. 100 gates of brass. Two palaces, one of them 7 miles round, enclosed in 3 walls. The second 300 feet high. The interior still higher, built of coloured brick, representing hunting scenes. . . *all*. *host*. Eastern armies were very large (Xerxes had above 2,000,000 when he invaded Greece B.C. 480). . . *built forts*, towers. Often moving towers were used in ancient sieges, by means of which soldiers could not only attack
- 2 the defenders of the walls, but even enter the city. . . *eleventh*, two
- 3 years. Stout resistance. . . *famine*. The besiegers prevented entrance of
- 4 provisions. . . *bread*, food in the general. . . *broken*, i. e. the walls and
- 5 towers. . . *Chaldees*, so the Assyrians were called. . . *plain*, towards Jordan. . . *scattered*, defeated and routed. . . *Riblah* (= fertility), headquarters of N. Site uncertain, but on N.E. frontier of Palestine. . . *gave judgment*, pronounced sentence upon. . . *put eyes* (com. Jer. xxxii. 4, 5; xxxiv. 3, with Ez. xii. 3). He saw B. in the sense that he went there, but did not see B. with bodily eyes. . . *carried Babylon*, prisoner of war, to grace
- 8 his triumph. . . *Nebuzar-adan* (= the chief whom Nebo favours). The k. having returned to B., N. was left to complete the conquest of Judea (Jer. xxxix. 2—13; xli. 10; xliii. 6; lii. 12—30). . . *captain.guard*, chief
- 9 marshal. . . *house, Lord*, temple. . . *king's house*, palace. . . *great house*, penalty of greatness. For once the poor might be grateful for poverty. . .
- 10, 11 *brake walls*, to destroy power, and prevent future influence. . . *fugitives*, or renegades, who made friends with the conqueror, as they thought, or the scattered soldiers. . . *multitude*, the masses of the people. War spares none. . . *carry away*, as slaves, a common custom in the old time. These
- 12 slaves would become domestic servants and field-labourers, &c. . . *poor*,
- 13 the peasantry. Again poverty would find occasion for gratitude. . . *carried brass*, a valuable metal in those days. Not, however, precisely like modern
- 14 brass. Frequently copper is meant, and bronze. . . *vessels brass took away*, some as curiosities, trophies of war. . . *gold silver*, curious and intrinsically valuable. . . *without weight*, i. e. of immense weight. Hyperbolic expression (ill. "like the sand on seashore innumerable"). . . *chapter*
- 18 (Fr. *chapitre*), capital of the pillar (less. 110). . . *Seraiah* (= warrior of Jehovah). . . *Zephaniah* (= Jehovah hides), who had succeeded Jehoiahah.
- 19 *officer*, or eunuch. . . *men.war*, probably the household troops. . . *five* (com. Jer. lii. 25). Jeremiah himself and the *officer* might make the seven. *king's presence*, his friends and counsellors. . . *scribe.host*, secretary-at-
- 20, 21 war. . . *took these*, principal citizens and inhabitants. . . *slew them*. Thus foreign conquests were often disgraced by unnecessary bloodshed, though these were perhaps slain as accessories to Zedekiah's revolt. Thus ended the kingdom of Judah, after 388 years from the death of Solomon, and 134 years from the captivity of the Ten Tribes.

Conquest—War—Cruelty of the Wicked—Punishment of Sin.

- I. **LUST OF CONQUEST.** Whence come wars and fightings, &c.? Nebuchadnezzar a great and powerful king. Very proud. Had not enough. Pride and covetousness never satisfied. He wanted more. Had his eye on Judah. A small country. No army or means of defence. Might and pride crushing a weak state. See this illustrated in common life. Wealth, lording it over indigence. Knowledge, subjugating ignorance. Self, seeking its own end. The elder children of a house, domineering over the younger. No true advantage gained by such dominion. The proud made more proud, the weak made unhappy.
- II. **HORRORS OF WAR.** (1.) The expenses incurred. Nebuchadnezzar's subjects oppressed to supply money and men. (2.) The fears aroused. Terror in Jerusalem, when from the walls the tents of the Babylonian host seen on all sides, and the towers rose to a level with their walls. (3.) Lengthened distress. Many months drag on, no sign of succour from friends, nor of abandonment of the design by the foe. (4.) Famine. No bread for the people. Want stalking up the streets. Starvation. Frequent deaths. No bread. (5.) The city taken. Flight of the army. Babylonian army pour into the city of David. Temples, palaces, and walls, &c., destroyed.
- III. **TENDER MERCIES OF THE WICKED.** They are cruel. See this illustrated by the history. (1.) The flying army pursued, attacked, scattered. (2.) The royal family captured, and brought into the conqueror's presence. (3.) Zedekiah's children slain in their father's presence. Terrible sight for a father to witness. (4.) Zedekiah himself would expect to be killed. His life is spared, but he is tortured and disgraced. His eyes put out. He is bound with chains. Sent as a prisoner to Babylon. Death would be preferable to this. Such the tender mercies of the wicked. Be thankful that we are in the hands of one who "delighteth in mercy."
- IV. **PUNISHMENT OF SIN.** Sin, of people of Judah. Punishment,—captivity. This punishment very great. Their sin had been great. Aggravated by their privileges. More expected of them than other nations. They had had many previous lessons. The punishment severe, not only to correct them, but to teach us. It shows us God's intense hatred of sin, especially of sin in those who have light, knowledge, &c., &c. A hint here to Sunday-school scholars. More expected of them by reason of the influences around them. The Jews are taken away from that Zion which they had neglected.

LEARN—

- I. Be content with such things as ye have.
- II. Seek ever to preserve peace, and be peacemakers.
- III. Consider what is reasonably expected of such as we are.

B.C. 570. Daniel iii. 1—30.

- 1 *Nebuchadnezzar* (less. 135). . . *image*, of what, or whom? *Nebo*? . . *gold*. Not less an idol, or more worthy of homage, on that account. . . *height*, more imposing in appearance. Better seen from afar. . . *threescore cubits*, about 75 or 80 feet high. . . *Dura* (=circle). Layard identifies it with *Dur*, on E. bank of Tigris. Probably Oppert is correct: he placed it S.E. of Babylon, near mound called *Dûair*, where he found pedestal of colossal statue.
- 2 *Then*, having finished the image. . . *princes*, &c. *provinces*, all the great
- 3 men of the city and kingdom. . . *princes*, satraps or viceroys. . . *governors*, deputies. . . *captains*, governors of provinces. . . *judges*, senators, legislators. . . *treasurers*, chancellors of revenue. . . *counsellors*, guardians of law. . . *sheriffs*, mufti. Law-officers. . . *gathered together*. Only too glad to please the king. . . *stood before*, waiting the next command. . .
- 4,5 *commanded*, do, or die. . . *cornet*, horn. . . *flute*, pipe. . . *worship*, do
- 6 homage. . . *king*. *set up*, and therefore let none disobey. . . *same hour*, no
- 7 reprieve. . . *fiery furnace*, a terrible punishment. . . *heard*. *sound*, preconcerted signal. . . *worshipped*. They would have worshipped anything
- 8 at such a bidding, and with such a penalty. . . *Chaldeans*, faithful sycophants willing to curry favour. . . *Jews*, whose religion was a protest
- 9,12 against their idolatry. . . *live ever*: empty flattery. . . *set over*, which had doubtless enraged them (see less. 138). . . *Shadrach* (=rejoicing in the way?). . . *Meshach* (=guest of the king). . . *Abed-nego* (servant of *Nebo*).
- 13 The Chaldee names of Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah (i. 7). . . *rage*. *fury*, the greater because the refractory were Jews, and such as he had honoured.
- 14,15 *true*, or of set purpose. . . *ready*. He will give them another opportunity.
- 16 *who*. *deliver*. Certainly not the golden image. . . *answered*. They wanted
- 17 no second trial. . . *God*. *able*. If he please. . . *he will*. Both able and
- 18 willing. . . *But if not*. It may be as much for his glory that we should be
- 19 willing to suffer as he willing to save. . . *visage*. *changed*, i. e. his feeling
- 20 altered, from royal favour to intense hate. . . *mighty*. *bind*, that they might be safely bound; and not escape by any device, nor be liberated by any
- 21,22 *God*. . . *coats*, mantles. . . *hats*, turbans. . . *slew*. *men*, who only went
- 23 near the furnace. . . *fell down*, because they were bound, and thrust vio-
- 24 lently in. . . *the king*, who himself superintended this royal sport. . . *astonied* (old Fr. *estouner*. From the same root we have *stunned*), over-
- 25 whelmed with wonder. . . *three*, and only three? . . *loose*, the fourth having unbound the others. . . *son*. *God*, like some glorious and Divine per-
- 26 son. . . *mouth*, door. . . *most high*, able and willing to save. . . *came forth*,
- 27 uninjured. . . *no power*: but the miracle had great power to work conviction in the mind of N. . . *smell*. *fire*. A portion of their Babylonish dress was
- 28 of woollen and the rest linen. . . *changed*. *word*, caused him to reverse his
- 29 decree. . . *make*. *decree*. An ingrained tyrant, imposing *by decree*, first the worship of one god, and now regard for another. In all this we see the pernicious results of civil interference in matters of the conscience and re-
- 30 ligious. . . *promoted*. Many captive Jews—Daniel, Mordecai, Nehemiah, Joseph—rose to eminence in strange lands. The reasons of this an interesting inquiry. Besides direct intervention of Providence, the Jews were of superior race, habits, character, &c.

Image—Champions—Furnace—Companion.

- I. THE GOLDEN IMAGE. (1.) *Situation*. A plain. Where all could see it, and be seen themselves, and where many might assemble. (2.) *Size*. Colossal. This, that it might be the better seen, strike the mind with greater awe, and better represent the power and wealth of the king. (3.) *Material*. Gold. Probably an image overlaid with golden plates. Burnished. Attractive. Costly. (4.) *Proclamation*. Given by sound of trumpet, &c. The command. All to worship that image. The threat, instant and painful death, to any who refused. (5.) *Purpose*. The king would rule over hearts, consciences, souls, as over territory. Bring all to one form of worship. Perhaps a blow intended at the Jews in his kingdom.
- II. THE CHAMPIONS FOR GOD. (1.) *Number*. Only *three* in that vast concourse. May have been other Jews, if so they were recreant. Daniel probably in some other part of the kingdom. We know how he would have acted. (2.) *Race*. Jews. Had been trained in the knowledge of God. Maintained their integrity. Would not subscribe to the customs and fashions of the time and place. Young men away from home. False maxim: "Do at Rome as Rome does." Yes, but only if Rome does right. (3.) *Conduct*. Stood while others bowed. In the king's presence boldly refused to render any homage whatever to the image. (4.) *Faith*. They would trust God. He *might*, or *might not* save them. But they would do what was right.
- III. THE FIERY FURNACE. (1.) *Intention*. To terrify into obedience. To show a fixed purpose. (2.) *Suggested* that the king was not sure of obedience without some such threat. They might not otherwise "fall down." His wish was not enough. (3.) *Disproportion* between the fault and the punishment. Do homage to an image, or be burnt to death! Monstrous tyranny! Modern furnaces. Persecution. Social ostracism, a furnace with which many are threatened who may decline to worship certain images. Absurdity and sin of any man trying to impose one form on all men. It assumes infallibility. (4.) *Device* of rage. Furnace made an extra heat.
- IV. THE DIVINE COMPANION. (1.) The *place*. In the furnace. They walked with him in prosperity, he did not leave them in adversity. He had doubled their joys, and would now divide their sorrows. Christ in this world walking with his friends through the furnace of affliction, &c. (2.) The *purpose*. (a.) To show he was not ashamed of those who confessed him. (b.) To break the power of the flames. (3.) The *result*. (a.) To the king. Astonishment, &c. (b.) Three Hebrews. Deliverance. (c.) The people. Saved from the obligation of worshipping an image. Benefits conferred upon society by the faithfulness of true men.

LEARN—

- I. Serve the Lord at all times.
 II. Expect his presence, to save, in time of trial.

B.C. 538. Daniel v. 1—30.

- 1 *Belshazzar* (= Bell's prince). See *anal.* . . *great feast*. Orientals were famous for their banquets (less. 111). . . *thousand*, by no means an improbable
- 2 number. . . *drank wine*, evidently intoxicating in its nature. . . *tasted*, and when excited. . . (Less. 141 ; *C. D. N. T.* 82.) . . *taken temple* (less. 135).
- 4 *might drink*. An impious profanation, as well as a drunken revel. . . *praised*.
- 5 *gods*, in intentional defiance of the God of Israel. . . *same hour*, while they were thus blasphemously occupied. . . *forth*, mysteriously, suddenly. . . *over against*, opposite to, or on the wall above. . . *candlestick* (1 Ki. vii. 49 ; Jer. lii. 19), or lamp-stands. . . *Changed*, with astonishment and fear. *thoughts*, conscience, apprehensions. . . *troubled*, the mystery perplexed.
- 7 *joints*, &c. He well nigh fainted at the sight. . . *wise men*, reputed wise by superstitious and ignorant people. . . *read*, characters in unknown tongue. Probably Hebrew or Samaritan. . . *interpretation*, quite another matter from
- 8,9 the mere reading (2 Pet. iii. 16). . . *third ruler*. See *anal.* . . *could not*, with
- 10 all their wisdom. . . *lords astonished*. They too saw, and were confounded. *queen*, probably Nitocris, the queen's mother. . . *live ever*, an absurd salutation, often used by those who wished a king's death. . . *a man*, Daniel, of whom she had heard before. . . *spirit gods*, wisdom, goodness, &c. (vi. 3 ;
- 12 Ez. xiv. 14). . . *father*, i. e. grandfather. . . *master* (ii. 48 ; iv. 9). . . *Belteshazzar* (= favourite of Bell). Were their names changed, to make them for-
- 13 get their country and religion, and attach them to the new ? . . *Art. Daniel*. He would not have one imposed upon him, who should pretend to explain,
- 14 and give false interpretation. . . *heard*, perhaps even before the queen spoke.
- 15 *could not*, flattered by depreciation of others. A too common practice.
- 16 *third ruler*. Daniel needed no bribe, and the promise was one that Belshazzar
- 17 could hardly make good. . . *Daniel*, an aged man at this time. . . *O king*. He commenced a withering denunciation of the king, by rehearsing former
- 18 lessons which Belshazzar had not heeded. . . *God*, not thy father's sword. *gave*, not because he deserved it, but for a purpose (2 Ki. xxiv. 20). . .
- 19,20 *whom would*, he had, and used despotic power. . . *deposed*, Chald. made
- 21 to come down, by him who had so exalted him. . . *driven beasts* (iv. 25 —33 ; Job xxx. 3—7). . . *till knew* (Ps. lxxxiii. 17, 18 ; Eze. xvii. 24).
- 22 *God ruled*. By whom kings reign : King of kings. . . *though knewest*
- 23 (Ja. iv. 17). Wilful ignorance bad, defiant rebellion worse. . . *hast praised*. Daniel knew of all this, though not present at the banquet. God had taught him, and prepared him for this hour. . . *Then*, because of these
- 25 things. . . *Mene*, Chaldean words, in another character. *Lit.* "He is num-
- 26 bered, he is numbered ; he is weighed ; they are divided." . . *numbered*, thy
- 27 sins and days, and of thy kingdom. . . *weighed*, in balances of truth, wis-
- 28 dom, holiness. . . *wanting*, in essential elements of character. . . *divided*,
- 29 rent in two by foreign conquest. . . *commanded*. His conscience told him
- 30 how true and right the sentence was. . . *night slain*, terrible ending of the feast, king, and kingdom. . . *Darius*, i. e. Cyaxares, son of Astyages, king of Media, and maternal uncle to Cyrus, who allowed him the title of his conquests as long as he lived.

The Royal Banquet—the Mysterious Writing—the Balances of God.

“It has been remarked that Evil-Merodach, son of Nebuchadnezzar, perished as B. did, after reigning as long. Zündel argues, therefore, that since single persons often bore two names, E. and B. were the same person. Xenophon describes a conquest of Babylon (*Cyrop.* vii. v.), which to a great extent, tallies with the Bible account. Sir H. Rawlinson, in 1854, discovered at *Mughier*, or *Mugeyer* (the ancient Ur), documents which prove that Nabonnedus in last years of his reign associated his son Bilshar-uzur with him, and allowed him the royal title. If this N. married a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar, and if B. was their son, the expressions Dan. v. 11, 13, 18, 22 are explained. Also as there were two sovereigns, it is seen why Daniel was proclaimed *third* ruler of the kingdom (v. 7, 16, 29). Here is proof, then, from independent sources, that a B. reigned” (*Rawlinson, Hist. Evid. Scrip. Rec.* lect. v. 168—171; 442—444; 536—538).

I. THE ROYAL BANQUET. (1.) *Who gave it.* A king. Display of power and wealth. (Compare with the better feast that the great King provides: (a.) In Providence for all. (b.) In the gospel for those who believe.) (2.) *Who were invited.* Lords, who did not need it (*com.* Lu. xiv. 13). (3.) *When given.* On the eve of a great danger. In the midst of enjoyment, &c., there is danger near (*Eccles.* xi. 9). (4.) *Its chief features.* (a.) Number present. (b.) Quality of guests and president. (c.) Conduct pursued. Profanity. Sacred vessels of sanctuary brought out. Insult to a conquered people. Contempt for the true God.

II. THE MYSTERIOUS WRITING. (1.) *When?* At a time when the festivity and profanity were at their height. (2.) *Where?* Along the walls of the hall. In full view. Near the sacred camp. (3.) *How?* Fingers of a hand. Mysterious hand gliding over the wall and leaving the strange characters behind! (4.) *What?* None knew. King terrified! Lords astonished! Wise men baffled! The queen's memory. Daniel thought of. Introduction of aged prophet. His bold recapitulation of former things. Appeal to the king and interpretation of the writing.

III. THE BALANCES OF GOD. (1.) *What they are.* (a.) Conscience. Every man has this. Accusing or excusing. Merciful provision to keep us right. This balance may be falsified. Leaded with indifference, seared with sin. (b.) *Reason* given to each, to understand, think, compare. (c.) *Truth.* Bible. This too may be wrested. For our own sake, we should seek to keep the balances in good order. (2.) *What is weighed in them.* (a.) *Men.* Those that seem heavy often prove light. (b.) *Actions.* Those that appear good are proved deficient. (c.) *Words.* Those that sound true are proved false. (d.) *Motives.* Those we thought honest and pure have their hollowness revealed. *Wanting!*

LEARN—I. The best banquet is the feast of love to which God invites us.

II. The best writing is the revealed way of life. III. Take heed lest the sentence of condemnation be executed (*Jo.* iii. 18).

B.C. 537. Daniel vi. 1—24.

- 1,2 *Darius* (less. 137). . . *hundred. twenty* (see anal.). . . *three presidents*, viziers. Doubtless these officials were Medes or Persians. Many had helped to *win*, and must now aid in *governing*, this new kingdom. . . *Daniel*, a Jew. One of conquered people. . . *first*. This nothing to do with
- 3 Belshazzar's decree. Daniel was grand-vizier. . . *preferred*. Darius a statesman, as well as warrior. . . *excellent spirit*, wisdom, honesty, &c. . . *thought*, resolved. Daniel had been about 65 years already in some
- 4 official station. . . *Then*, moved by envy, jealousy, &c. . . *occasion*, not cause, but occasion, i. e. opportunity, &c. . . *concerning kingdom*, i. e. his office.
- 5 *faithful*, soon discovered. He was too faithful for them. . . *law. God, D's*
- 6 fidelity to which might give them the occasion. . . *Then*, having matured
- 7 their plot. . . *these*, themselves unfaithful. . . *All*, they were unanimous in desiring the downfall of Daniel. . . *thirty days*. Eastern laws made for a given term. Date of repeal fixed at time of passing. . . *lions*, that
- 8 were kept for royal sports. . . *according. law*, which was, that to repeal a
- 9 law thus passed before the given date was treason. . . *Wherefore*, not per-
- 10 ceiving their design. His mind blinded by flattery. . . *Daniel knew*. He would be of the first to know. . . *writing. signed*, which might be his death-warrant. . . *open*, no concealment. . . *toward Jerusalem* (1 Ki. viii. 30—48; Ps. v. 7; Jo. ii. 4; Heb. iv. 16). . . *three. day* (Ps. lv. 17; lxxxvi. 3, marg.). More frequently than most in prosperous times. . . *as. aforetime*,
- 11 as if nothing had happened. . . *assembled*, as spies beneath the open windows. *found*, as they knew they would. . . *Daniel*, and the occasion they sought.
- 12 *praying*, perhaps for them and the king. . . *Hast, &c.* Having secured
- 13 Daniel, they now ensnare the king. . . *answered*, with affected sorrow, and regard for king's interest. . . *of Judah*, the secret of their hate. . . *regard-*
- 14 *eth not thee*: not true. But he regarded more, a higher King. . . *laboured*,
- 15,16 to find some legal way of escape for Daniel. . . *Know*, remember. . . *com-*
manded, could not help himself. . . *the king*, who needed comfort more
- 17 than Daniel. . . *deliver*. Whence had Darius this faith? . . *stone*, could keep
- 18 Daniel *in*, not the angel *out*. . . *purpose*, of death. . . *king went*, sadly, they rejoicing. . . *palace*. Daniel happier in the den. . . *fasting*. Com. with
- 19 former feasts. . . *sleep went*. He would think of Daniel. . . *early* (Ps. cxxx.
- 20 6). . . *den. lions*. What could he expect? . . *cried*, probably intending only
- 21 to mourn over Daniel's grave. . . *live. ever*: strange of words spoken in an-
- 22 other place, by other lips (v. 6). . . *my God*. No other could. . . *before him*,
- 23 in affairs of religion. . . *before thee*, in the affairs of the kingdom. . . *com-*
manded, having obeyed his decree by casting in, no law against taking
- 24 out. . . *no. hurt*, to person or character. . . *because*, the best possible rea-
son. . . *believed*, practical faith. . . *commanded*, a thing they had not counted upon. . . *cast. in*. The place of such men more easily filled in the state than of one Daniel. . . *lions. mastery*. No angel now to master them. *bones*, tore limb from limb. . . *before. bottom*, hence not tameness or lack of hunger that restrained them in Daniel's case.

Daniel's Difficulty—Fidelity—and Deliverance.

- I. DANIEL'S DIFFICULTY. (1.) *How it arose.* (a.) From the malice and envy of his coadjutors in office. Did not like to see one of a hated, despised, and conquered race placed over them. Instead of seeking for themselves a right spirit, they sought to destroy him who had it. (b.) Weakness of the king. His love of flattery. "Live for ever," &c., blinded him to the purpose of his great men. (2.) *On what it was founded.* On his known fidelity to God. His integrity in the discharge of official duty baffled their hope of finding any flaw in that direction. (3.) *The shape it assumed.* His life in danger. How to save it? How to serve God and obey the king? The decree. Could not be repealed. Treason to suggest its repeal. Laws made for a certain fixed time must remain in force till that time expired.
- II. DANIEL'S FIDELITY. (1.) *Did not act in ignorance.* Knew the writing was signed. One of the first to know it. Entered no protest against the signing or publishing of the decree. (2.) *Sought no evasion.* Many would have worshipped God in secret, those thirty days. In some arbour of the garden, or with closed windows and "bated breath." He did as aforetime. *When* and *where* he had always prayed he still continued to pray. (3.) *With strong faith in God.* Windows open toward Jerusalem. Remembered the old promise. (See *note* and *ref.*) Had often thought of Jerusalem. Did not now forget. Might be very near the better city. Never did the "right spirit" more truly show itself than now. Difficulties test character. The good, shine brightest when the surroundings are dark.
- III. DANIEL'S DELIVERANCE. (1.) *Perseverance of cruelty.* "They assembled," &c., "and found." Nothing would have more surprised them than *not* to find, &c. (a.) They knew Daniel's time and place of prayer. (b.) He made no secret of his religion. (2.) *Perplexity of the king.* They pinned him to his words. He discovers the snare. Tried to deliver Daniel. He is forced to pronounce the sentence. (3.) *The execution.* Sad procession to the den of lions. Sorrow of the king, ill-concealed joy of the persecutors, sublime confidence of Daniel. The den sealed. (4.) *The deliverance.* By an angel. The king in his palace, Daniel in the prison: a contrast. The morning. The king at the den. Daniel taken out. No hurt. Why? (5.) *The retribution.* The persecutors overwhelmed, no angel to save them.

LEARN—

- I. Think no strange thing has happened when difficulties come.
- II. Be true to conscience and God in the midst of difficulty.
- III. *He* is able to save to the uttermost.

B.C. 536. Ezra i. 1—11. (Isa. xxxv.)

- 1 *first year*, of his reign over Babylon, &c. . . *Cyrus* (see anal.). . . *Persia*. According to testimony of ancient writers Cyrus at this time reigned over the Medes, Persians, Hyrcanians, Syrians, Assyrians, &c., and all lesser Asia. This kingdom founded by Cyrus (B.C. 536, Hales). . . *that fulfilled* (Jer. xxv. 12; xxix. 10). . . *stirred*. *Cyrus*, who, like many others, so stirred, little thought of the source of this excitement. . . *proclamation*, Heb. "made a voice to pass," i. e. by means of heralds (Dan. iii. 4). . .
- 2 *writing*, thus confirming it. . . *Lord heaven*, the true Jehovah. . . *all earth*. Oriental hyperbole. Yet Persian kingdom was greatest in world at that time. . . *charged*. He would regard the prediction in that light. His spirit,
- 3 too, was stirred. . . *his people*, Jews. . . *let go*, liberty to captives. . . *build*: this was Cyrus's aim, and liberty of Jews the means. . . *God Israel*, THE
- 4 *God*. Wonderful admission by a heathen prince! . . . *whosoever*, of the Jews, who may remain behind. . . *let men*, both Jews and my subjects. . . *help*. So of old Israel was helped by Egypt (less. 65). . . *silver gold*, only reasonable. The same people had helped themselves to the silver and gold of Israel aforetime (less. 135). . . *freewill offering*, in making which, Cyrus himself took the lead. . . *then*, rejoicing at good news and glad tidings.
- 5 *rose*, gladly making preparation. . . *chief*, principal, most influential. . . *Judah Benjamin*, which amalgamated tribes had formed the kingdom of Judah (less. 112). . . *priests Levites*. By the Jews as well as by Cyrus it was regarded as more a religious than a political liberty. . . *spirit raised*. He excited their mind also as well as Cyrus's. . . *build house*, a precious
- 6 occupation for them. . . *all about them*, their minds stirred by him in whose hands are the hearts of all, and by the royal proclamation, as an instrument. . . *strengthened*, helped them. . . *vessels, &c.*, valuable and
- 7 useful. . . *beasts*, for burden and food. . . *vessels house Lord*. To the returning captives the most precious of all their property. . . *which forth* (less. 135). . . *house*, temple (perhaps the celebrated temple of Belus,
- 8 then recently erected or restored). . . *Mithredath* (=given by Mithra), the sun-god. . . *Sheshbazzar* (=fire-worshipper). The name apparently borne in Persia by Zerubbabel (=begotten in Babylon) (v. 14, 16), descended from David, called son of Salathiel or Shealtiel (Hag. i. 1; Matt. i. 12. But see also 1 Ch. iii. 17—19). He was the leader of those who returned (Neh. vii. 7; xii. 1) with High Priest. Joshua erected an altar (iii. 2), began to rebuild temple (v. 8), refused the aid of Samaritans (iv. 2, 3) when they intrigued at the Persian Court, and for a time stayed the work (v. 2;
- 9 Hag. i. 12, 14; ii. 2, 4, 20—23; Zech. iv. 6—10). . . *number*. Probably only the larger are here described as 2499, since (v. 11) the total number was 5400. . . *chargers* (Num. vii. 13), Heb. root, signifying depth; hence the charger was a deep vessel. Called dishes, Ex. xxv. 29; xxxvii. 16. From the word *here* the chargers were perhaps more shallow, slaughter-vessels, to receive blood of victims. . . *knives*, for sacrificial purposes.
- 10 *other vessels*, not inclusive of small vessels (the list in Esdras is gold cups, 1000; silver cups, 1000; silver censers, 29; gold vials, 30; silver vials, 2410;
- 11 *other vessels*, 1000; total 5469). . . *All these*, besides the offerings of the people (v. 5). These were things formally delivered out of the royal treasury.

 Royal Proclamation—Generous Contribution—Joyous Procession.

NOTE ON CYRUS. Cyrus said to have been the son of Cambyses, king of Persia, and Mandane, daughter of Astyages, king of Media. Born about 600 B.C. Died aged 70, after reign of 30 years. Mentioned by name, and conquests foretold by Isaiah (xliv. 28 ; xlv. 1—4), above a century before his birth. Josephus (*Ant.* l. ii. 2) accounts for his partiality for the Jews, from these prophecies being shown him by Daniel. Those who departed, numbered nearly 50,000 (viz. 42,360 with servants, 7337), chiefly of tribes of Judah and Benjamin. Among the servants were 200 singers ; of animals—736 horses, 245 mules, 435 camels, and 6720 asses (ii. 64—67). They were about 6 months getting to Jerusalem. The captivity lasted 70 years, i. e. from 606—536 B. C. (Jer. xxix. 10—12).

I. THE ROYAL PROCLAMATION. (1.) *By whom issued.* Cyrus. Of all the great works of this great king, this only predicted. But all the rest were foreseen. God thought it not worth while to speak of others. Our religious relations the most important. (2.) *To whom made.* (a.) To the *Jews*, that they might go. (b.) To his own *subjects*, that they might aid the Jews to return. (3.) *The time at which issued.* After a captivity of 70 years. God's proclamation of freedom comes to us in our youth. Our captivity has been short.

II. THE GENEROUS CONTRIBUTION. (1.) *By whom.* By a heathen. By a conqueror. (2.) *To whom.* To Jews. To captives. Men who had not the power to take or the right to expect. Think of the great King's mercy to us. We were weak, and without right to mercy. (3.) *Of what.* Very costly gifts. Very precious gifts. Their associations, &c. God's gifts to us. Costly, and exciting the best feelings and thoughts.

III. THE JOYOUS PROCESSION. See Isaiah xxxv.

“ There rose the choral hymn of praise,
 And trump and timbrel answered keen ;
 And Zion's daughters poured their lays,
 With priests' and warriors' voice between.
 No portents now our foes amaze,
 Forsaken Israel wanders lone ;
 Our fathers would not know thy ways,
 And thou hast left them to their own.
 Our harps we left by Babel's streams,
 The tyrant's jest, the Gentile's scorn ;
 No censer round our altar beams,
 And mute are timbrel, harp, and horn ;
 But thou hast said,—‘ The blood of goat,
 The flesh of rams I will not prize ;
 A contrite heart, an humble thought,
 Are mine accepted sacrifice.’ ”—(*Walter Scott*.)

LEARN—

I. The wonderful and exact foreknowledge of God.

II. The hearts of all are in his hand.

III. “ The captive exile hasteneth,” for God calls *us* home.

B.C. 535. Ezra iii. 1—13. (iv. 16—22.)

- 1 *seventh month* (Tisri, less. 54), from the departure from Babylon (Neh. viii. 14). They were about six months on the march, and in settling themselves in the cities of Judah, &c. . . *in cities*, in their old homes. How changed all would be. . . *one man*, i. e. with unity of aim and spirit. . . *Jerusalem*. A desolate heap of ruins was all that now remained of the temples, and
- 2 palaces, &c., of Solomon's splendid metropolis. . . *stood up*, to inaugurate "the great work," and set an example of piety and zeal to the rest. . . *Jeshua* (= Jehovah the salvation), represented especially by Zech., as a type of Christ (Hag. i., ii.; Zech. iii., vi. 9—15). . . *Jozadak* (= whom Jehovah makes just), son of High Priest Seraiah (1 Ch. vi. 14, 15). . . *Zerubbabel* (less. 139). . . *altar*. The neglect of the altar resulted in captivity. Thus
- 3 they celebrated their return (less. 12). . . *bases*, the old original foundation. *fear people*, &c. Hence they acted wisely in securing the friendship of
- 4 God. They came to build, not fight. . . *feast tabernacles* (less. 67). . . *as written*, as they were commanded and instructed. . . *by number* (Num. xxix. 12—38). . . *custom duty*. They are now very exact in the per-
- 5 formance of their religious duties. . . *continual*, &c. (Ex. xxix. 38—42; Num. xxviii.). . . *willingly*: they had learned that it was blessed to give.
- 6 *foundation laid*, yet they waited not for this. Prepared for labour by religious exercises. Did not omit to regard that as their great work. . .
- 7 *gave money*, which they had brought with them, given them for the purpose in Babylonia. . . *masons*, including all workers in stone. . . *carpenters*, carvers, and wood-workers. . . *meat oil*, in the place of money, as barter. Parted with necessities of life to secure material for the temple.
- 8 *Joppa* (less. 130). . . *according grant*, as far as it went. . . *second year*, the previous time having been occupied in collecting materials. . . *twenty years* (Num. iv. 3; 1 Ch. xxiii. 24—32). . . *set forward*, advance it. The time
- 9 having arrived. Material collected. . . *Jeshua*. Not the Jeshua before mentioned, but another, a Levite (ii. 40). . . *together lit.* as one. . . *set workmen*, they acting as overlookers. . . *Henadad* (=favour of Hadad), head of a
- 10 family of Levites (Neh. iii. 18, 24; x. 9). . . *when* (Zech. iv. 10), the looked-for day arrived. . . *they set*, they arranged a grand religious service. . . *priests apparel*, in a formal way, and in their official character. . . *trumpets* (Num. x. 1—10; 1 Ch. xv. 24; xvi. 5, 6, 42). . . *cymbals*: metallic musical instruments of percussion. Very ancient. Still used, with no great variation of form. . . *praise Lord*, the trumpets and cymbals leading the way. . . *ordinance David*, who was *musician* as well as king.
- 11 *by course*, in due order; with responses; first one party, then another. . .
- 12 *because good* (Ps. ciii. 17; cvi. 1; cvii. 1). . . *ancient men*, very aged men. *seen first house*, now more than 70 years before. . . *wept*, at the recollec-
- 13 tion of the glorious house departed. . . *joy*, in prospect of the work upon which they now entered. . . *discern*. The sound was mingled, and confused. Haggai (ii. 1—9) comforted them with the assurance that the glory of this latter house should exceed the glory of the former; for the Lord would come to this temple and fill it with his glory.

Spirit—Principles—Emotions.

Subject:—The erection of a house for God. This history teaches—

- I. THE SPIRIT IN WHICH IT SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN. (1.) *Piety*. Commenced by rearing an altar, and holding a solemn religious service. They did not suffer the new work to interfere with any established and recognized duty. The time of feast of tabernacles was at hand, so they held the feast. Did not regard the present occupation as an excuse for neglecting *that*. (2.) *Union*. Priest, prince, and people all united. Neither regarded it as the work of others alone. It was a work for God, to whom they were all equally indebted. (3.) *Cheerful consecration*. They willingly offered a free-will offering (*v.* 5). The poor did not leave it to the rich, nor did the powerful tax the weak. Each did what he could, and did it willingly, as unto the Lord.
- II. THE PRINCIPLES ON WHICH IT SHOULD BE CONDUCTED. (1.) *Honesty*. They did according to the grant (*v.* 7). Did not think they might trespass on the unpromised liberality of the people. Did not tax the future, to do what they felt to be a present duty. Would build as handsome a temple as the grant and offerings permitted. Would not go beyond *that*. Would not leave a debt upon the house of God, who will be no man's debtor, and who has himself commanded us to owe no man anything. (2.) *Justice*. They gave money to the work-people, and a fair equivalent for material. Did not expect people to give time, trouble, skill, in addition to their offering. Bought the best talent they could find, and paid honestly for it.
- III. THE EMOTIONS BY WHICH IT MAY BE ACCOMPANIED. (1.) *Memory of the past*. Some there were who remembered the old temple. In building a new house, though it may be more beautiful and costly, there are always some who cannot forget the old humble sanctuary. Such memories deserve, and should command, respect. (2.) *Joy for the present*. That they were permitted to do this good work. That they had the ability and the disposition. Joy that so many entered zealously into the undertaking. (3.) *Hope for the future*. Thought of the blessing it would be to unborn generations. Before their minds passed the picture of the tribes coming up to worship. They thought of the salvation that would go forth from Zion, and how men would rise up to call them blessed for their work's sake.

LEARN—

- I. Rejoice if we have the opportunity and means of building God a house.
- II. Cultivate a right spirit, not sectarian zeal or Pharisaism, in the work.
- III. See that justice and honesty mark the history of such erection.
- IV. Prepare for the worship of that world wherein is no temple.

B.C. 458. Esther ii. 1—20.

- these things*, i. e. the deposition of Vashti. . . *Ahasuerus* (= lion king), a name which in one of its Greek forms is Xerxes. Prideaux seems (*Connection*, i. 199) to have satisfactorily proven that A. = Artaxerxes Longimanus, but most critics now identify A. with Xerxes. . . *Vashti* (= a beauty), a noble woman, his former queen, who had been divorced because she refused to appear before the king and his nobles at a drunken revel (i. 10—12). . . *done. decreed*, her crime and punishment; or rather her virtue
- 2 and persecution. . . *said. servants*. Wishing to console the k. for the loss of Vashti: whom he could not restore because of the Persian law, which did not allow of a k.'s decree being repealed. . . *virgins sought*. Of whom the
- 3 most beautiful might succeed Vashti. . . *appoint. palace*. This a usual custom
- 4 in Persia (*marg. Bagster's C. Bib.*). . . *pleaseth. king*, satisfied his mind.
- 5 Xerxes a very licentious monarch. . . *Shushan*, called by Greeks Susa, one of the royal cities of Persia. Among the ruins have been found remains of noble palace with frontage 343 ft, and depth of 244 ft. . . *Mordecai* (= little
- 6, 7 man). . . *carried away*, i. e. his ancestors were. . . *Hadassah* (= myrtle). *Esther* (= a star), adopted by her cousin Mordecai. . . *father. mother*. A beautiful orphan, in a strange land. . . *fair. beautiful*, Heb. fair of form,
- 8 and good of countenance. . . *Esther. brought*. Her beauty an instrument by which Providence worked (less. 49, *anal.*). . . *Hegai*, or *Hege* (v. 3). Prob.
- 9 the eunuch having charge of the k.'s harem. . . *pleased him*. Much of the comfort of the women of the seraglio depends on the favour of this officer, secured in this instance by a gift, or by courteous manners. But Providence overruled the history. . . *speedily*, so she lost no time. . . *seven maidens*, as attendants. . . *meet*, suitable (A.S. *gemèt*, fit, proper). . . *pre-*
- 10 *ferred*, advanced. . . *not shewed*, not told, made known. . . *people*, nation. *kindred*, Mordecai in particular. Had she done so, her advancement had been doubtful. . . *charged her*. He knew the jealousy of the Persian, and
- 11 his contempt for the Jew. . . *walked. day*. Great love for his cousin, and interest in her welfare. . . *court. house*, into which he might not enter, though apparently himself an officer of the king's household, and concern-
- 12 ing which, it was not lawful even to make inquiries. . . *according. manner*, custom of the Persian court. . . *purifications*, which consisted of anoint-
- 13 ings, perfumings, bathing, &c. . . *desired*, ornaments and apparel. . .
- 14 *called. name*. Which in that case would be inquired by the king. . . *turn*.
- 15 *Esther*. Which by reason of the preference shown her already came soon. *required. nothing*, sought no adornments. Modest. Beauty unadorned, adorned the most. . . *appointed*: left it to him, who knew best the king's
- 16 tastes. . . *in. sight*, estimation, judgment. . . *house royal*, his palace. . .
- 17 *favour*, kindness. . . *sight*, presence. . . *made. queen*: this Jewish maiden, whom Providence designed as the means of greatly blessing the Jewish
- 18 people. . . *Esther's feast*: a banquet called by her name, in honour of her. *release*. Bestowed certain royal benefactions on the people, in her honour.
- 19 *king's gate*, discharging the duties of his office. . . *did. commandment*, still obeyed her adopted father. Her obedience made a blessing to her and her people. . . *like as, &c.* The queen did not forget her old friend and old duties.

Wickedness overruled—Providence outworking—Piety illustrated.

- I. WICKEDNESS OVERRULED. *He maketh the wrath of man to praise him.* (1.) *Wickedness of Ahasuerus.* The cruel disposition and divorce of the noble-minded Vashti. He never thought of God. Had not the fear of God before his eyes. His own will was law to him. (2.) *Wickedness of his counsellors.* Instead of seeking justice for the noble but dishonoured Vashti, they try to make him forget the wrong he had done, and minister to his unbridled licentiousness. Horrible picture of a wicked court. (3.) *Yet God could overrule* even this dreadful history, and bring good out of the sad course of these wicked men. Compare this with the ignorance of good men, who are perplexed by the evil around them, and with the folly of wicked men who bring evil out of the good. God's *will of command*, sincerely disallowing and reproving wickedness, and his *will of control*, foreseeing disobedience, overruling all.
- II. PROVIDENCE OUTWORKING. "Light is *sown* for the righteous," &c. The sowing precedes, by some time, the gathering. Here was the *sowing* of light, in Esther's exaltation, against the future day when the craft of Haman would overcast the Jews' sad day with dark and portentous clouds. (1.) The overruling of wickedness was one step. (2.) The faith of Mordecai and piety of Esther other steps by which this was done. The Divine will combines all characters, events, resistances, and weaves them into the grand purposes of mercy and grace. None can let or hinder. Favour was given Esther in the sight of Hege. Her position advanced. No time lost. Delay might have proved fatal to the Jewish people. Yet none of these actors knew, as they thought they fulfilled their own wills, how perfectly they were under the control of another.
- III. PIETY ILLUSTRATED. (1.) *Esther.* Obeyed Mordecai, as when she was living as his adopted daughter. Saw how much might depend upon her strict obedience. Felt that she was thus elevated to be of some use, at the first unknown, to her people and kindred. How many Jewish maidens, or how many of any but Jewish extraction, would have repudiated their race under such circumstances? Her race despised, enslaved, herself a queen. Now honoured, yet a despot's wife. The sad history of the former queen not unknown to her. (2.) *Mordecai.* Sorry to part with his niece, yet anxious to bear patiently, and do what is right. Gives to Queen Esther good advice. Does not, as many would, talk of his high palace connections. Still continues to do his duty in the king's gate.

LEARN—

- I. To be calm and undismayed in the midst of worldly commotion.
- II. To wait and watch for the unfolding of the Divine plans.
- III. To serve the Lord at all times.

Esther iii. 1—15.

- 1 *Haman* (=magnificent). As Agag was prob. a general title of kings of the Amalekites, as Pharaoh of the Egyptians, it is likely that Haman, son of an Agagite, was of the royal seed of Amalek. . . *Hammedatha* (= ? *twin* or *double*). . . *advanced*, in rank and power. . . *seat above* : placed on a higher dais than others, i. e. promoted him to the rank of grand-vizier, or confidential adviser.
- 2 *king's gate* : the entrance or porch of the palace. Was the place where all business was despatched. . . *bowed, revered*. They had their own advancement to seek. . . *But*. Here was a 'but' in the circumstances of magnificent Haman. . . *bowed not, &c.* "Had this meant only civil reverence, the king would not have needed to command it; nor would M. have refused it; there was therefore some kind of Divine honour intended, such as was paid to Persian kings, and which even the Greeks refused as express adoration."
- 3 *servants*, amongst the first to observe this. They, not sincere in the homage paid to "the magnificent," and therefore envious of one who followed another course. . . *king's commandment*. Not "Is the thing right?" or, "Why not render worthy homage to a worthy man?" but, "Why not obey?" &c. To them everything was right that the k. ordered. *hearkened not, obeyed not*. . . *told Haman*, perhaps to torture him, as well as out of private pique.
- 4 *a Jew*. This explanation shows that he regarded the obeisance as involving a religious element.
- 5 *Haman saw*, what he had not before noticed.
- 6 *scorn, alone*. His pride would not allow such small revenge. . . *all Jews*, as a demonstration of his greatness. This act shows how little he was worthy of any homage, much less Divine honour.
- 7 *Pur* (=a lot). Kings and nobles of Persia are said never to undertake any plan without consulting astrologers, &c., deciding upon the most auspicious day.
- 8 *Haman said*. Having discovered the times most favourable for the various steps of his atrocious scheme. . . *king's laws*. The assertion untrue, except in so far as it related to this commandment, which was not, strictly speaking, "a law." The envious and malicious are often not over-exact in point of truth.
- 9 *written*, and so made sure by special decree. . . *I. pay*, as a compensation for any loss which the revenue might sustain. This sum, reckoned by the Babylonish talent=£2,119,000; the Jewish talent would amount to twice
- 10 as much. . . *ring, gave*, with which to seal any decree that Haman, "the enemy," might draw up.
- 11 *given, thee*. The k. declined to accept compensation from his favourite.
- 12 *scribes, secretaries*. . . *to every people, &c.*, that none of the hated race might escape.
- 13 *posts* : special messengers, mounted on fleet camels and mules (Esth. viii. 14; Job ix. 25; Jer. li. 31). . . *one day*. Cruelly imitated in France on the day of St Bartholomew (Aug. 24, 1572. The number thus murdered by the Catholics have been variously computed from 20,000 to 100,000).
- 14 *be ready*, with weapons, &c. The hope of spoil would sufficiently prompt those whom national antipathy had already made "ready."
- 15 *king, Haman*, worthy confrères. . . *drink*, with sublime indifference. . . *perplexed*, especially the doomed race : and many others who saw the cruelty of the decree.

Haman's Dignity—Indignation—Superstition—Subtlety—Cruelty.

The feast of Purim, so called from the word Pur = a lot, is celebrated by the Jews on the 14th and 15th of the month Adar, as a memento of their preservation, by Mordecai and Esther, from the destruction prepared for them by Haman (ix. 20—32). The festival was sometimes called "Mardocheus" (Mordecai's) day. It was observed by reading the Book of Esther in the synagogue and with general festivity. During the reading, as often as the name of Haman occurred the people stamped and uttered curses: "Let his name be blotted out." The custom of holding this feast is said to be dying out.

- I. HAMAN'S DIGNITY. (1.) *His appointment.* Made the grand-vizier. Exalted above all the other princes. Beggars ride on horses. The unworthy often honoured with princes' favours. Sad results to a nation when the great men are not good men. (2.) *His honours.* All were to bow to him. Persian kings were deified. The king to be worshipped in the person of his great little viceroy. Haman would take the honour to himself.
- II. HAMAN'S INDIGNATION. (1.) *Mordecai's unflinching integrity.* Refuses to bow. A perilous course at such a time, among such a people. (2.) *Haman's kind friends.* Many there were who did not like the proud man. Were glad of an opportunity of mortifying him. They tell him about Mordecai. They also disliked Mordecai, because he was a Jew. Through him they desired to see if they also might not avoid the bowing.
- III. HAMAN'S SUPERSTITION. (1.) *Indignant* through what he had heard, he resolves upon a splendid revenge. An act by which he should signalize and demonstrate his power. (2.) *Superstitious* as he is, he will proceed only by favourable omens. He may fail otherwise. The Jews are numerous and valuable in the empire. This proved by the money he offered to the king. The lot cast.
- IV. HAMAN'S SUBTLETY. (1.) *Interview with the king.* He will do nothing without authority. Would make a cat's-paw of the king. It shall be the king who shall do the deed. Make the king unpopular. Perhaps with an eye to the throne himself. (2.) *Conceals the real truth.* Is silent about Mordecai. Had he spoken, only Mordecai would have suffered. Traduces the whole people of the Jews. Charges them with treason.
- V. HAMAN'S CRUELTY. (1.) *Comprehensiveness of his plan.* Will cut off the whole nation. Men, women, children. None shall escape. He would effectually prevent such indignity in the future. (2.) *Speedy execution.* The posts hastened. Ill news fly fast; the adage illustrated here. (3.) *Cruel indifference.* This done, he sat down to a wine feast. Did he wish to drown remorse? or was it his object to make the king overlook the consequences of what he had done?

LEARN—I. The penalties of greatness. II. Folly of fortune-telling and lot-casting. III. The cruelty of pride. IV. The wretchedness of a people whose governors are godless. V. Perils of honesty and truth.

 Esther vi. 1—14; vii. 1—10.

- vi. 1,2 *not.sleep* (Dan. ii. 1; vi. 18). . . *book.records* (ii. 23). . . *Bigthana* (ii. 21, 22). It is not unlikely that it was some friend of these two conspirators who stirred up this matter about Mordecai (iii. 4). . . *What honour*. Was that sleepless night merely an accident? . . . *nothing*. Thus was the k. prepared to do *something*, and look favourably on M. . . *Who court?* He required some high official. . . *Haman*, the very man for his purpose. . . *speech.gallows*, which speech, the king forestalled by speech of another kind. . . *Let.in*. Even H. would not enter the presence without a special summons. . . *more.myself?* Note the egotism of this "magnificent" individual. . . *answered*, joyfully, with an assumed interest in the king's wish. . . *apparel.horse.crown*. This was very nearly allied to a treasonable thought. He who would cut off a nation, and do this to gratify his pride, would not have been slow to take another step to secure the crown. 9 *one.princes*. He little thought who the one on the horse, and the other by the side of it would be. . . *Make haste*. The saying pleased the king. . . *nothing fail*. Haman's advice was fulfilled to the letter. . . *proclaimed*, thinking meanwhile of that gallows that he had so prematurely prepared. 12 Imagine his chagrin. . . *Mordecai*, doubtless wondering much at what had been done. . . *came.gate*, to discharge the duties of his office. . . 13 *Haman hasted*, overwhelmed with confusion. . . *told.wife*, to whom he had so recently told quite a different tale. . . *wise men*: some prob. who had aided in casting the lot (iii. 7; less. 142). They were wiser now than before. *If.seed.Jews*. They had prob. heard much of the Jews and their wonderful history. . . *bring.banquet*. His mind much troubled by recent events and prophecies: in which state of mind he would but ill meet future dangers and charges.
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- vii. 1,2 *came.banquet*, doubtful of the issue. . . *second day*. Oriental banquets 3 lasted sometimes for several days. . . *half.kingdom* (Mark vi. 23). . . *my life*, which of all things the king would be anxious to preserve. . . *my people*. The king did not know her nation as yet. . . *had.sold*: they were captives already. . . *countervail*, counterbalance (Lat. *contravalere*). . . 5,6 *Who.he*. The king does not think of his decree. . . *this.Haman*, whom the king had petted. . . *afraid*. His mind in such a state that he could not 7 meet the charge. . . *went.garden*, the better to compose himself, and consider what to do. . . *stood*, to plead for his life. . . *fallen*, in his agony of entreaty. . . *bed*. In the East they recline at feasts on broad cushioned couches arranged round the table: it was here that *Haman* fell. . . *word*, sentence. . . *covered*. The *Roman* sentence was:—"Go, lictor, cover his 9 head; and hang him on the accursed tree." . . *Harbonah.said*. Haman had enemies as well as friends. There were doubtless not wanting those who hated Haman for his pride. . . *spoken good*. Harbonah made the 10 case as bad as he could for Haman. . . *prepared.Mordecai*. He was snared in his own net. . . *pacified*. He had seen justice done. How many more in the kingdom were pacified?

Discovery—Honour—Prediction—Accusation—Execution.

- I. A PROVIDENTIAL DISCOVERY. He who "giveth his beloved sleep" can withhold sleep. A sleepless king. The reading of the records. The story of unrequited fidelity. The hand of Providence prevented the lids of his eyes from closing. God in apparently little things. Let the records of memory be read in our sleepless hours. Call to mind things done and things omitted. Debts of gratitude left in arrear. Especially what we owe to God. So shall sleepless nights become a blessing to us. Little did Mordecai think what was occurring in the royal chamber.
- II. UNEXPECTED HONOUR. (1.) *For whom designed.* Mordecai. One of the race already doomed. The posts distributing the decree. Haman waiting for the day of execution. God's providence also sending thoughts and events post-haste along the courses of palace life. (2.) *By whom devised.* Haman himself. Thinking the honour was meant for him. (3.) *The overwhelming discovery.* The honour intended for the man he most hated. (4.) *By whom executed.* By himself. He must do homage to the man who would not bow to him. (5.) *Mordecai's surprise.* He sees the first step of Providence.
- III. THE GLOOMY PREDICTION. (1.) *By whom it was made.* By Haman's wife and wise friends. His fellow-plotters. Who had listened but recently to the story of his rising greatness when it was—"who but Haman"? (2.) *What they foretold.* His certain fall. That fall the greater, by reason of the height to which he had climbed. No uncommon thing in the East for a man to be in great power one day, and in the dust the next. (3.) *On what it was founded.* On the fact that Mordecai was a Jew. This was the view of superstition, and not faith.
- IV. THE FEARFUL ACCUSATION. (1.) *The banquet.* Haman attends not by virtue of his office, but by special invitation (v. 8, 12). What had once caused joy to his proud heart, now filled his superstitious mind with gloomy apprehensions. He must have looked the guilty man he was. (2.) *The king's promise.* He would grant Esther anything she asked. Not so safe for her to speak unbidden. (3.) *Her request.* Beggars her own life, and that of her people. Haman forgot that he had compassed the death of the queen, or did not know her relation to Mordecai. He had over-reached himself. (4.) The king's great indignation and Haman's despair.
- V. THE PROMPT EXECUTION. (1.) Haman begs for mercy. He had shown none. He who had sought the death of thousands of innocent people now cannot save his own guilty life. (2.) *The king returns* from the garden, and issues the sentence. Haman falls into the pit that he had digged.

LEARN—

- I. To recognize the providence of God in little things.
- II. To leave our case in the hands of Him who has promised to undertake for us. "Vengeance is mine," &c.

Neh. vi. 1—14.

- 1 *Sanballat* (=praised by the army), native of Horonaim in Moab. Prob. in some post of authority (ii. 10, 19, 20; iv., vi., xiii. 28). . . *Tobiah* (=pleasing to Jehovah), an Ammonite. Called "the servant," had ? been a slave, and risen to influence (iv. 3, 7; xiii. 4—9). . . *Geshem* (=rain) ? chief of some tribe of Arabs. . . *enemies*. Always plenty to oppose any good work. . . *builded wall*. Till then they were silent.
- 2 *meet together*, ready for treason, they waited till Jerusalem had become a stronghold. They wanted to ensnare Nehemiah. . . *villages*, where the meeting might be unnoticed, and no danger apprehended. . . *mischief*. If he would not join *their plot*, they would misrepresent *his words*.
- 3 *great work*. See *anal*.
- 4 *four times*, perseverance in wickedness of wicked men.
- 5 *open letter*, an insult. Letters to officials always carefully folded, placed in silk bags and sealed.
- 6 *reported*: but N. was not responsible for such reports. Suppose he had accepted their appointment, what would *they* have reported? . . *rebel*, against Persia.
- 7 *now shall*, an impudent threat. . . *counsel*. If they believed the report, by this offer, they proved *themselves* rebels. In truth, they wanted hush-money, or a share in the plot.
- 8 *no such things*, a straight-forward denial. . . *as sayest*, and knowest. . . *feignest heart*. You have yourselves invented the whole story, and are worse than those you call "the heathen." How much worse than heathens are many who do evil, knowing better!
- 9 *saying*, secretly among their confederates. . . *weakened*, for they feared the growth of a power in Judah that would rival Samaria. . . *Now God*. His only weapon was prayer. . . *strengthen hands*, not for war, or rebellion, but this "great work."
- 10 *Afterward*, these outside enemies being disposed of. . . *Shemaiah* (=Jehovah heareth him), a secret emissary of Sanballat. . . *shut up*, in pretended fear. . . *Let meet*. Another private meeting proposed. N.'s refusal, even to attend these meetings, a good example for men with itching ears, who attend meetings of men who plot against God (infidels, &c.), "just to hear the other side." N. was not afraid of being seduced by their arguments, but he had, what all should have, something better to do,—a "great work" from which he could not "come down."
- 11 *such as I*, a man of mark, whom others look to for example. . . *flee*. What would the rest do? . . *save life* (Mat. x. 28—39). My life is in the keeping of God. . . *will not*. A resolute and prompt denial the best way of meeting
- 12 temptation. . . *perceived*, discovered prob. by Divine illumination, or learned from some one in the secret. . . *hired him*. What will not men do for hire? "Love of money the root of all evil."
- 13 *afraid*. And if so, then he would do his work with hesitation, or be willing to protect himself by taking council with his enemies according to their wish. . . *sin*, by neglecting duty, and mistrusting God. . . *evil report*, and a true one this time. A report that he was in collusion with the enemies of the Persian court. . . *reproach*, and by reproaches urge me forwards to other sinful measures.
- 14 *think thou*. Take my case into thy mind, and overrule all this wickedness for thy glory. So N. dismissed these sinners for the time from his thoughts by passing them over to the thoughts of God, who could do more than *think* about them.

 Agents—Objects—Principles—Resistances—Results.

Re-building of Jerusalem an essentially religious undertaking. A religious undertaking a great work. The greatness of such a work appears from—

- I. THE AGENTS EMPLOYED. (1.) They embrace Divine and angelic beings. (2.) Holy men of all ages. Patriarchs, prophets, apostles. Works are often considered as honoured by their association with noble names (Solomon and the Temple, Prince Albert and Crystal Palace, &c.). The greatest and wisest of mankind have been engaged in religious enterprises, and found their joy in them. Reformers (*Luther*, &c.). Poets (*Comper*, *Watts*, *Milton*, &c.). Preachers (*Wesley*, *Whitfield*, &c.). Missionaries (*Carey*, *Elliot*, *Moffatt*, &c.). Philanthropists (*Howard*, *Raikes*, &c.).
- II. THE OBJECTS CONTEMPLATED. (1.) Some of a *negative* character. Restraining sin, and error. (2.) But most of a *positive* nature. Building of a great spiritual temple. Conversion of souls. Spread of truth. Evangelization and civilization of mankind. Compare such as these with the objects commonly sought among men. Increase of personal wealth, fame, enjoyment. Extension of territorial power, and the like. This result eternal, others only temporal.
- III. THE PRINCIPLES EXERCISED. (1.) The motives, &c., that make men truly great, all find their exercise in religious enterprises. (a.) Faith in God and truth. (b.) Holiness of heart and life. (c.) Love to souls and Christ. (d.) All the graces of the Holy Spirit. (2.) Greatest of worldly undertakings have not such underlying principles as these. Pride, ambition, selfishness—in some form or other—originate the greater part.
- IV. THE OPPOSITION OVERCOME. In a world of sin every holy work will be resisted. Resistance stirred up by Satan in the hearts of his servants. Outside Jerusalem, Sanballat; inside, Shemaiah. Outside ourselves, the world, &c.; inside, sin, &c. Other works have to overcome material difficulties, but this spiritual hindrances. Pride, covetousness, lust, &c., &c. As the greatness of a battle is estimated by the number of the enemy and his strength, so of this work.
- V. THE RESULTS SECURED. (1.) Of merely human enterprises; temporal, of doubtful goodness, many positively bad. (2.) Of religious undertakings. Eternal, blessed, always good. The world won back to allegiance to God, heaven peopled with ransomed sinners.

 LEARN—

- I. Seek to have a place amongst the best workers.
- II. Aim at the best objects.
- III. Give place to the holiest principles.
- IV. Expect opposition.
- V. The result is sure. Therefore let the teacher, who is at this work, reply to every temptation, from without or within, to abandon it:—
 "I AM ABOUT A GREAT WORK, I CANNOT COME DOWN."

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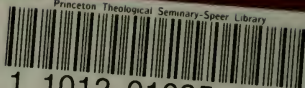
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